

# **THE RISE OF THE MALL**

A Thesis Presented to  
the Department of Historic Preservation,  
Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation  
Columbia University in the City of New York

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree Master of Science

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2012





## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Many thanks to my advisor, Denny, whose continual guidance and insight helped me shape and reshape this thesis into a more complete argument than I had the foresight to imagine.

To my parents, for their love and support and for my suburban upbringing, without which I may not have had the sensitivity to find my love for “the mall”.

And to my husband, for his constant encouragement and enduring patience. I would never have had the courage or the strength to tackle these four long years without you. ...we made it!

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## **CHAPTER 01**

*The Significance of the Mall*

*"When we think about American cities, the image of a coherent urban center persists. Set at the other end of the spectrum, we often have a heroic image of rural America. Even our concept of what falls in between relies on a snapshot of suburban life idealized in the 1950s. But these views, frozen in a misty past, continue to influence decisions about the planning and design of the new suburban landscape."*

*Mark Robbins, "Redressing the Mall", Sprawl and Public Space.*

## **| PREMISE**

The suburbs are the American landscape. The endless parade of shopping strips and meandering subdivisions, big box retailers and mesmerizing miles of interconnected expressways all form the image that defines what most Americans call "home". That a majority of Americans today are suburbanites is not a statistic to be taken lightly. Suburban expansion drastically changed the American landscape in the postwar era. The change not only decentralized the American population, but spurred enormous changes in the way we live, work, and spend our free time. Patterns of suburban development erased the concept of town borders and with it any identity of "center". The suburbs received little criticism during the immediate post-war period of rapid growth, but critiques of suburban life came swiftly and sharply in the last decades of the 20th century, and not without cause. As John Palen summed up, "prior to the 1960s, urban-area scholars were not



particularly astute or insightful in examining the phenomenon of suburbanization... suburbia [was] an outer-commuter's zone. No one seemed to think the area, or the process, merited further elaboration."<sup>1</sup> Lewis Mumford changed that with his book *The City in History*. His biting critique of the suburbs for many has become an almost subconscious judgment of suburban life; "a new kind of community was produced, which caricatured both the historic city and the archetypal suburban refuge...a multitude of uniform, unidentifiable houses, lined up inflexibly, in uniform distances, on uniform roads, in a treeless communal waste inhabited by people... conforming in every outward and inward respect to a common mold manufactured in the central metropolis."<sup>2</sup> Yet this and other similar critiques were an absolute change from the way that suburban life was depicted before World War II. The romantic ideal of suburban life developed from the wealthy suburbs of the 19th century had become ingrained as an American icon complete with grassy lawns and wide porches. The virtues of nature were easily presented to the public in the form of suburban life whose goal was "an improved-upon naturalism" providing husbands a refuge from the city and allowing housewives to develop "their spiritual, sentimental and intellectual capacities."<sup>3</sup> Thus the choice of suburban life was just as much a pragmatic as it was a moral choice as John Palen commented, "the line between the home itself and the idealization of the family was blurred."<sup>4</sup> This type of idealism was well entrenched in the minds of middle and working class Americans who, following the end of World War II, found that the suburbs were within their grasp. What was once an upper middle class escape was now being changed by myriads of veterans' families and young couples who filled the endless tracts of homogenous housing developments. William Whyte's portrayal of this new suburban life as a kind of standardized existence in his 1956 book *Organization Man*,

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1 J. John Palen, *The Suburbs*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995), 77.

2 Lewis Mumford, *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1961), 486.

3 Palen, 69.

4 Palen, 70.

presented a critique of suburbs that would dominate popular opinion of suburbia for the rest of the century. Yet despite popular opinion, the suburbs are a testament to a significant period in the shift of the American way of life as we transformed from a country of city and rural dwellers to the world's first suburban nation.

The regional mall arose at a time when the suburbs were exploding prewar patterns of suburban development; shedding the identity of bedroom community and becoming autonomous zones of industry, commerce. Designers in the these years immediately following the end of World War II, saw chaos developing in the suburbs. Fueled by the freedom of the automobile, they recognized the loss of any sense of place among suburban communities with the absence of the types of common gathering spaces that could foster social cohesion and cooperation. The lawns and porches that brought many to the suburbs were not enough to create community or encourage healthy social connections. Along with this absence of public space was the problem of congestion and the lack of a pedestrian zone. Cars were the preferred and often only option for transportation which put enormous pressure on the limited parking facilities and narrow streets in the central business districts and neighborhood shopping centers. As a solution, designers saw the opportunity for a new type of commercial experience, one that folded together the civic and social programs of a traditional city center into the commercial functions that satisfied both the day-to-day and long term needs of suburban populations. The need for goods brought people to these centers and the sense of community fostered by various non-commercial functions kept them coming back, creating a focus of community activity in the process. Writings by architects of the era, the reception by critics and the response of the public all filled with idealism for this new building is very revealing of the exact importance the regional shopping center held for the suburbs of this period immediately following World War II. This initial period of idealism gradually faded as critiques of suburban life eventually made their way from

suburban homes and populace to the place where that boring mass of people spent their time – the mall.

The lack of identity and haphazard sprawling was, and still is today, a uniquely suburban problem. The regional mall was a solution that was equally unique. As a new building type, it created a place where indistinguishable towns could convene and create a new center for their center-less developments. The extent to which their new building type rooted itself in suburban life can be seen today in the overwhelming forms of mega regional malls and expansive shopping outlets. These behemoths are only shadows of their 1950s ancestors, yet their incredible success spells the legacy of this building type in suburbia. Margaret Crawford, writing in 2002, identified three popular perspectives on malls today, the generic mall, the sprawl-generating mall, and the mall as commercial machine; “The first depicts the mall as a building type... largely determined by real estate economies, marketing research, and architectural behaviorism...reproduced from coast to coast. The second narrative portrays the mall as a fundamentally anti-urban force...defined as the antithesis of livable urban spaces and incapable of providing genuine urban experience. The third narrative sees the mall as a vehicle for a continuous process of commodification, through which...social and communal experience and public spaces are swallowed up by commerce.”<sup>5</sup> These narratives are commonplace in our understanding of shopping malls today, but fail to recognize both the inherent adaptability of the shopping mall type and the social consciousness with which many early malls were built, a sensibility that many inner-ring suburban malls still have the potential for.

Current trends in population migration and poverty in today’s suburbs suggest that the future for malls around America is in a transitional period. Incomes

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5 Margaret Crawford, “Suburban Life and Public Space,” in *Sprawl and Public Space: Redressing the Mall*, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2002), 21.

have declined and for the first time suburban populations are showing the highest percentage of the nation's poor.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, suburbs are showing signs of decreased growth as the Brookings Institute observed from the 2010 census, "notwithstanding the general outward expansion of metropolitan areas over the full decade, the period from 2006 to 2008 saw a retrenchment of population toward cities and high-density suburban counties as outer suburban housing markets crashed."<sup>7</sup> In addition, high vacancy rates in commercial structures throughout the United States have led to the abandonment and loss of many commercial structures.<sup>8</sup> Adding to these problems is the fact that the young families who initially settled the suburbs are aging and their children are creating a trend of moving back to the cities their parents and grandparents left. This leaves the regional malls that were planned and designed for families – not empty nesters – at risk. The current retail vacancy rate combined with these factors is indicating that those malls that served as the backdrop for much of suburban life need to be re-evaluated to ensure that the legacy of these monuments to postwar era of America's 20th century do not fall into the condition that many are facing today.

The regional mall's significance lies in the ways it managed to capture the ideals of an era and the imagination of designers, critics, and the general public alike. As a design response to a new form of life, the mall is an important piece of the story of the American suburban dream. As an adaptable form, capable of reinventing the commercial experience again, the mall is an integral part of the future of our decaying inner-ring suburbs. Through this thesis I present a challenge to current opinions of the mall and suggest a future that approaches mall designs and theories of the past. Regional shopping centers were born from concepts for a

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6 Sam Roberts, "Population Study Finds Change in the Suburbs," *New York Times* 09 May 2010: <<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/09/us/09decade.html>>

7 "State of Metropolitan America," *Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program* 2010: 33.

8 Migeul Bustillo and Kris Hudson, "Malls Face Surge in Vacancies," *Wall Street Journal* 07 Apr. 2011: < <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704101604576246972728969548.html>>

new public realm. With a new approach in the face of the realities of our inner-ring suburbs, those same shopping malls can once again be called centers.

## | THESIS APPROACH

Through understanding the history, design and culture of this building type, and taking a look at the criticisms that it has garnered over its six decades of existence I hope the significance of the mall will come to light. My research begins with the growth of suburbia beginning in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and ending in the late 1960s, outlining suburban commercial development as it was fueled by the streetcar followed by the interlude of depression-era and wartime developments followed by the explosion that occurred after World War II with the advent of a predominantly automobile society. Coupled with this investigation is the development of transportation based planning that eventually led to the regional mall from the earliest stages of planning for strip malls around lines of rapid transit to the eventual, and still current method of siting regional malls based on major highways or intersections of major roads. Also tied to transport in terms of design, are the methods by which architects and developers overcame the notion that consumers preferred to walk as little as possible into the concept that shoppers enjoyed multi-story enclosed pedestrian structures. The analysis of design follows the standards developed as these new building types were being formed in the late forties and early fifties, as architects, planners, landscape designers, graphic designers and artists perfected the features considered necessary to create a total environment that had the possibility to make shopping an activity of leisure. Through the lens of the regional shopping center's cultural role in suburbia, I then move on to an analysis of the regional shopping center's significance based on early conceptions of its role as a community center and a centralizing force in the decentralized communities of suburban America. Its role as the new public space for these center-less developments changed indefinitely the American social life. I

end with an examination of mall development after the 1960s, popular opinions about regional malls and current positions of architects, planners and preservationists concerning the regional mall. My aim is to build a case for the regional shopping mall's significance to preservation and to uncover to what extent they are representative of an era of significant change in American culture. By evolving these two arguments, I present an argument for how this revolutionary building type might be adapted to better fit a changing perspective and survive the next stage in the growth, or lack thereof, of the American suburb.







## **CHAPTER 02**

*Mall History*

The history of suburban commercial development is coupled with the history of sprawl. As patterns of sprawl were not equivalent across the country, the periods of development vary slightly according to region. For instance, development in the car dominated cities of Los Angeles and Houston was earlier and more extensive than in many east coast cities. The history presented here represents a linear understanding of the development of both form and ideas that can be understood across the country.

## | SHOPPING CENTER TYPES

In a Eugene Kelley, in a 1956 traffic report outlined the following shopping districts that proves useful to the understanding of this topic during the years when the regional shopping center was gaining prominence.<sup>1</sup> First in the retail structure

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<sup>1</sup> Eugene J. Kelley, *Shopping Centers; Locating Controlled Regional Centers* (Saugatuck, CN:

is the Central Business District. It is defined by the inner core, inner belt and outer belt. The inner core was the center of all shopping activity – the heart of the “downtown” retail structure – while the inner belt is where administrative offices, banks, and the like were to be found. The outer belt was defined as being a residential zone, which according to Kelley were “on the verge of becoming slums”.<sup>2</sup> Second in the retail structure was the Main Business Thoroughfare, which was comprised of a string of streets leading out of the central business district lined with retailers that depend on commuters for their business. Third in the retail structure was the Neighborhood Business Street which contained convenience goods along the town’s main thoroughfare. These types of stores, along the main thoroughfare and neighborhood business streets, were the extent of suburban commercial development in the years leading up to the Great Depression. Fourth was the Small Cluster and Individual Store made up of either a branch store or two complementary, rather than competitive, stores. This type was located according to population density but was not a planned center. Fifth in the retail structure was the uncontrolled Secondary Commercial Sub-Center made up of three parts, the neighborhood, community and suburban districts. Merchandise sold in these districts was similar to that offered in the Central Business District but in limited stock and variety. Convenience goods sold here were offered in larger quantities than one could find in the Central Business District. The customers that frequented these districts were those living in the area. As the area developed it often becomes more convenient for residents to frequent these secondary sub-districts rather than make a trip to the central business district, however these unplanned sub-centers did not have off-street parking. These types of small cluster and sub-center shopping districts emerged first in Depression-Era and Wartime housing developments and then were later evolved after the end of World War II. The complementary retail structure to the uncontrolled Secondary Commercial Sub-Center is the controlled Secondary

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Eno Foundation for Highway Traffic Control, 1956), 62.

<sup>2</sup> Kelley, 63.

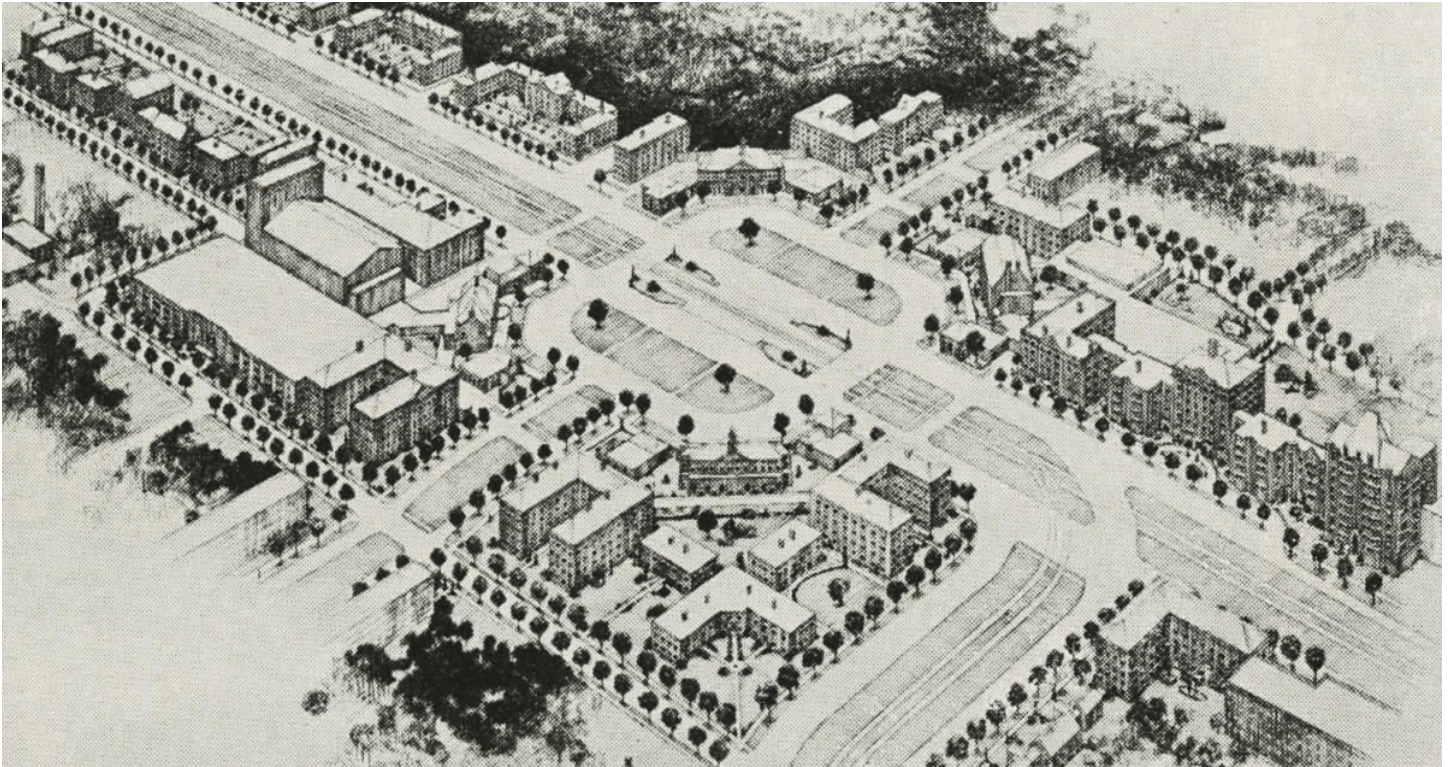
Commercial Sub-Center. This center was planned to serve a specific trading area, either at the neighborhood, community or suburban level, and was equipped with off-street parking facilities. This type of center exploded in the postwar era and dotted the landscape of suburbia. The combination of uncontrolled centers, small controlled clusters, and a variety of shopping strips along all main roads was what led to the creation of the Controlled Regional Shopping Center, the focus of this thesis. This type was planned to attract consumers from an entire region and was sited far enough on the outskirts of the suburban zone to take advantage of low land prices required sustain this large conglomerate. This retail structure today is much the same, however it is important to note the customer draws in these areas and how the controlled regional shopping center turned the pyramid structure upside down, creating for the first time a place other than “downtown” where goods could be bought and sold on a large scale. Although suburban development had begun long before the development of the regional shopping center, it took a series of specific developments in transportation, population growth, and architecture to create a system that presented the need for the unprecedented form and function of this new building type.

## **| EARLY SUBURBAN COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

The patterns of suburbanization that led to the creation of the regional shopping center began in the nineteenth century. Street car lines took those who could afford it back and forth from their bedroom communities to their city jobs, allowing an escape from the congestion, pollution, and crime of America’s industrialized centers. As John Palen articulated, “pre-World War II suburbs were built to have the best of both worlds. They could appeal to the long standing anti-urbanism of many Americans...[and] could be enjoyed while residents remained within a short commute of the city and kept all the urban advantages.”<sup>3</sup> These

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3 Palen, 50.



suburban zones existed only insofar as they had the ability to connect residents with the jobs and shopping that could only be found 'downtown'. Early commercial developments in these suburbs were focused mainly on convenience goods and predictably followed the rails and stations that ferried these suburban populations, offering limited selections in narrow store fronts aligned in strips along the lines of mass transit. By 1900, these types of strip centers lined most of the major roadways that connected suburban communities with their city.<sup>4</sup> These strips of taxpayers were meant to be temporary placeholders until such a time when the high density development of the city would reach the low-rise strip and warrant the construction of a more profitable venture. However, as suburban sprawl continued, city growth declined and low density development remained the norm. These early suburban commercial stores catered mostly to those who utilized mass transit, and so parking space was often limited to a single row directly in front of the stores.

This can be seen in the case of Shaker Square [fig 01]. Completed in 1929

## | 01

### SHAKER SQUARE

Located in Shaker Heights, a suburb of Cleveland, designed by Philip L. Small and Charles Bacon Rowley, opened in 1929. Stores are organized around the intersection of two main roads and a trolley line.

source:

Geoffrey Harold Baker, and Bruno Funaro, *Shopping Centers; Design and Operation*. (New York: Reinhold, 1951), 184.

<sup>4</sup> Peter G. Rowe, *Making a Middle Landscape* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1991), 110.



## COUNTRY CLUB PLAZA

Located in the Country Club District, Missouri, a development outside Kansas City, designed by Edward W. Tanner Associates, opened in 1922.

source:

Geoffrey Harold Baker, and Bruno Funaro, *Shopping Centers; Design and Operation*. (New York: Reinhold, 1951), 79.



to serve the community of Shaker Heights, which had opened in 1916, this early shopping center features four buildings that frame a central plaza area transected by a trolley line leading into Cleveland. The dependence on mass transit in this development cannot be ignored. Perhaps more obvious than its strip center counterparts, Shaker Square's proximity to the street car line was the clear driver of this commercial venture. Even though the shopping center was situated at the intersection of two main roads, parking space was limited, indicating that the commuters arriving by street car were the intended consumers. This would change after the explosion of automobile ownership following the end of World War II. This change in mobility forced many pre-war shopping centers to change their approach. As Shaker Square's parking facilities quickly became outdated in the post-war era, land that might have otherwise been given over to commercial development was used as a parking lot. Similar examples abound as developers followed the waves

of mass transit riders that peaked in 1923, and replaced by buses and then automobiles.<sup>5</sup> The transfer of shopping traffic from mass transit to the automobile that began before the Great Depression was enough to warrant the development of a small number of large planned shopping centers, the few examples of which would remain anomalies until the 1950s. Country Club Plaza in Kansas City [fig.02] begun in 1923, Suburban Square outside Philadelphia built in 1928, and Highland Park Shopping Center outside Houston completed in 1931 are examples of such developments.

Early strip centers proved useful precedents in their ability to coordinate several tenants within a modulated façade, a practice that would influence shopping center design for the rest of the century. However, in many cases the use of signs and billboards meant to capture the attention of commuters and passers-by obscured the buildings and added to level of chaos in the development of suburbia, a practice that would inspire designers to create a uniform shopping experience in the regional shopping center. Additionally, before the advent of the automobile, strip centers followed the logic of a city's lines of mass transit, presenting goods to the consumers at easily discernible nodes of daily life. Their forms and methods of planning were in direct response to rapid transit and thus presented a specific solution to a specific situation. The early shopping center was formulated around the notion that customers did not want to walk from store to store but rather wished to arrive at a single store to purchase a predetermined item and then leave. This idea, formed in the years when the car had not exploded building and city design past the human scale, would influence the design of shopping centers well into the 1950s until the regional shopping center broke the mold. The important legacy of these strips in the development toward the regional shopping center is both their direct response to a specific scale of development and patterns of movement.

5 Geoffrey Harold Baker, and Bruno Funaro, *Shopping Centers; Design and Operation* (New York: Reinhold, 1951), 7.

These early centers followed a defined logic associated with the lines of mass transit that moved suburban populations within a given metropolitan region. Following World War II and the rise of an auto-centric culture, nodes of consumer activity became less easily defined which created sporadic patterns of commercial zones. The logical development of shopping center planning was broken by highway development and car ownership which promulgated incoherent, chaotic development across the United States until architects of the planned regional shopping center developed an idea to recapture some of the coherency in early strip center development.

## **| DEPRESSION-ERA AND WARTIME COMMERCIAL CENTERS**

The period of commercial development during the Depression Era and the years of World War II presents an interesting break in the otherwise linear history of the development toward the regional shopping center. The examples of important commercial developments specific to these years are limited to certain town planning projects that were necessitated by the unique circumstances of this period. Now encompassed within the greater suburban sprawl, these new towns were built at a time when there were no connections to those cities that inhabitants have access to today. What is most applicable in the study of these autonomous towns is that they most approximate the character of suburbs in the post-war era of automobile transport. Prior to the explosion of car ownership and the subsequent flights of jobs and commerce from the city centers, suburbs were still 'sub' urban. Suburban communities relied on their 'downtown' as a place to work and shop. Those suburban shopping centers that existed prior to 1946 were meant to serve as convenience-based shopping, providing only a limited stock of goods with the understanding that the regional city was the locus of all shopping needs. After the advent of a newly auto-centric society, cities became even more congested with traffic and their lack of adaptability to



a car-based consumer culture caused an exodus of all things related to living, working and leisure. This changed the suburbs from dependent satellite towns into autonomous 'cities' in their own right. In these depression-era projects we find many of the autonomous characteristics of a later era but without the auto culture. Many residents arrived at these shopping centers by simply walking from adjacent neighborhoods, thus creating a pedestrian culture in the design of these centers that would eventually be brought to a manufactured level in the regional shopping center.

The first of these autonomous towns are the developments created by the Resettlement Administration during the depression years. Under the direction of Rexford G. Tugwell, an admirer of the work of Ebenezer Howard, three towns were built in an effort to provide work for the underemployed Americans.<sup>6</sup> Those towns were: Greenbelt, Maryland outside of Washington D.C.; Greenhill, Ohio outside Cincinnati; and Greendale, Wisconsin outside Milwaukee. These new industrial towns were meant to boost the country's economy by giving work to the unemployed and were designed "to encourage a family and community life which will be better than [modest income families] now enjoy".<sup>7</sup> These towns had to be sited on land that was inexpensive enough to justify the cost of the project thus resulting in new towns that were far removed from any city center. Because these new towns were not connected to any kind of city center, the architects and planners had to invent a new center to be the focus of community life. At Greenbelt, begun in 1935, architects Reginald J. Wadsworth and Douglas D. Ellington along with planner Hale Walker devised a town plan based on the concepts of Clarence Stein and his influence town planning at Radburn, New Jersey. The town of Radburn, adapting Ebenezer Howard's ideals, was intended to be a "self-sustaining social group, big enough to provide a base for schools and services yet small enough

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6 Leland M. Roth, *American Architecture: A History*, (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2001), 403.

7 Baker and Funaro, 233.

### 03 |

#### GREENBELT, MARYLAND

Designed by Rexford G. Tugwell,  
begun in 1935. Plan of  
Greenbelt's shopping center.

source:

adapted from Geoffrey Harold  
Baker, and Bruno Funaro,  
*Shopping Centers; Design and  
Operation*. (New York: Reinhold,  
1951), 234–235.



to be perceived by the individual and to promote self-identity.”<sup>8</sup> At Greenbelt, the adaptation included a town center in the form of a shopping center, designed with the intentions of social cohesion and the role of the individual within a community. The shopping center was organized by a supermarket and theater along with small shops complemented by a pedestrian mall around which were organized a recreation center, school and swimming pool [fig.03, fig.04]. This organization of stores around a mall, termed a “pedestrian mall scheme”, gave shoppers the opportunity for community interaction in a space that held multiple functions relating to both commerce and civics.<sup>9</sup> Which by 1951, was still only one of only a handful of such schemes in the United States. The design was a radical departure from the shopping centers of earlier years. Parking was relegated to large lots surrounding a centralized cluster which focused not on the automobile in its parking space but rather on the consumer in the mall. By placing a large gathering space in the center of the development, the design responded to the pedestrian scale, giving room for benches and landscaped areas that “encourage[d] the old to gossip and

8 Roth, 398.

9 Baker and Funaro, 234.



## | 04

### GREENBELT, MARYLAND

The landscaped mall of Greenbelt's shopping center.

source:

Geoffrey Harold Baker, and Bruno Funaro, *Shopping Centers; Design and Operation*. (New York: Reinhold, 1951), 234.

the young to play”.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps a result of an automobile culture that had not yet come into its own, hinted at in part by the strings of bicycle racks deliberately planned into the scheme, the shopping center was not just a center for commerce but also a center of community life for a population devoid of an accessible city center.

Wartime developments continued this thread with their similarly autonomous towns. These towns were built during a period when shortages and restrictions left many without cars, thus forcing many centers to be designed with the pedestrian, not the automobile, in mind. The town of Maplewood, Louisiana was heavily influenced by the town planning of Greenbelt and its shopping center was no exception. It too featured an interior mall with stores focused inward surrounded by such amenities as a school, church and public parks. In the town of Linda Vista, California outside San Diego, the town's shopping center was also designed with an inward focus, with its store entrances organized around a courtyard [fig.05, fig.06].

Departing from the two previous examples, the service entrances at Linda Vista

<sup>10</sup> Baker and Funaro, 234-235.

## 05 |

### LINDA VISTA, CALIFORNIA

Designed by Earl F. Giberson and Whitney R. Smith, completed in 1940. View of the interior mall at Linda Vista's shopping center.

source:

Geoffrey Harold Baker, and Bruno Funaro, *Shopping Centers; Design and Operation*. (New York: Reinhold, 1951), 240.



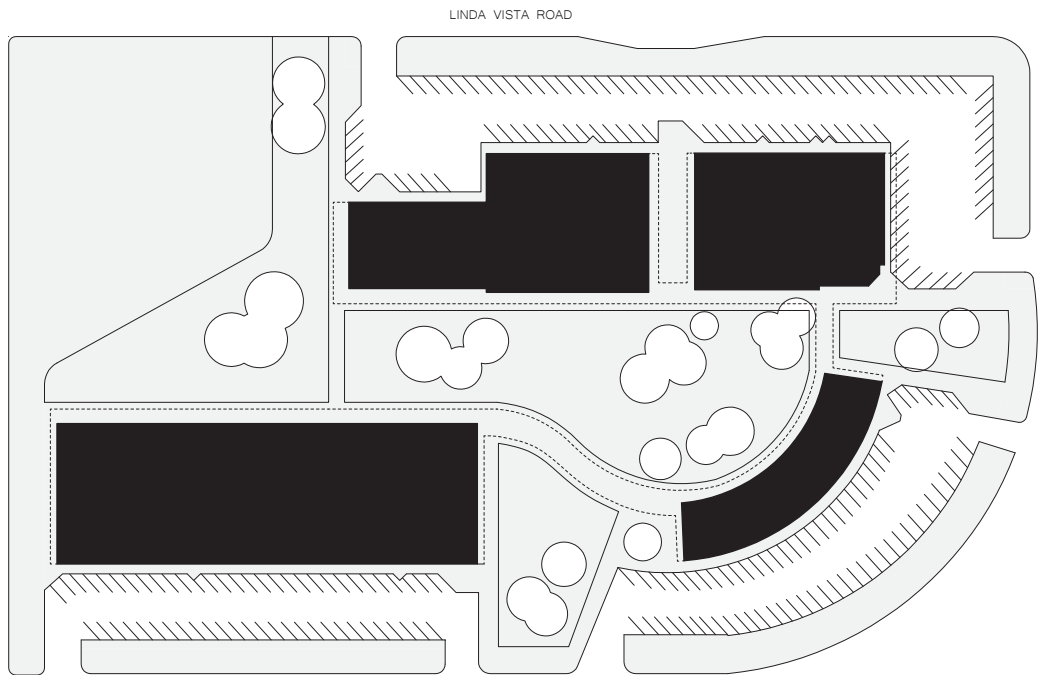
## 06 |

### LINDA VISTA, CALIFORNIA

Plan of Linda Vista's shopping center.

source:

adapted from Geoffrey Harold Baker, and Bruno Funaro, *Shopping Centers; Design and Operation*. (New York: Reinhold, 1951), 238.



faced the roads from which the shoppers arrived, a method that would be employed much later in regional shopping center design. Bruno Funaro and Geoffrey Baker, writing of the Linda Vista's shopping center in 1951, claimed of the exterior facing service yards, "it is quite a heavy price to pay for the pleasant quiet charm which suffuses the pedestrian courtyard inside".<sup>11</sup> The shopping center was comprised of three separate structures connected by canopies and arcaded walkways. Within the interior of the complex a large mall was designed with trees and benches. The "charm" of which Funaro writes suggests a kind of singularity in this center's design which, like at Greenbelt, recognized the need for a community center complete with common gathering spaces. At Los Alamos, New Mexico built by the US Atomic Energy Commission, its shopping center brings to mind a type of historical town square model with shops surrounding a mall bordered by civic buildings such as a town hall and post office. The town's location away from any urbanized center, like many other wartime developments, dictated the need for a civic center which, in the minds of the architects folded well into the program of the shopping center.

The melding of civic and commercial functions into one cohesive 'center' was the method employed by regional shopping center architects in suburban America during the postwar era. As the suburbs became increasingly autonomous from their city centers with the addition of jobs and commerce to the once bedroom communities, the need for defined centers that could fit into the specific development patterns of suburbia arose. Immediately following the war commercial development in America's suburbs took a step back in relation to the developments made in depression era and wartime developments, as it continued on the trajectory of commercial centers serving a city-dependent rather than autonomous suburban population on the brink of defining an entirely new living pattern for the twentieth century.

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11 Baker and Funaro, 237.

## I POSTWAR SUBURBAN COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

In the years that followed the end of the Second World War, America went through a dramatic change. In 1945 when the war came to an end so did wartime shortages. Gasoline rationing ceased, automobile production resumed, and the sixteen years spent struggling through depression and war prompted many to indulge a “consumer binge”.<sup>12</sup> The growth of the suburbs thus picked up where it had halted before 1929. Although suburbs had surpassed cities in percentage growth since the 1920s, due to a combination of highway building programs and enticements into homeownership, the decentralization of urban centers began in earnest after 1946.<sup>13</sup> By 1950, ten of the twelve largest cities in the United States hit their population peak.<sup>14</sup> In those twelve cities, the percentage of population in the central cities in relation to the population of the whole metropolitan region dropped from 60 percent in 1940 to 55 percent in 1950.<sup>15</sup> Over the next three decades, eighteen of the nation’s largest cities would suffer a net loss in population as the suburbs doubled in numbers from 36 million in 1950 to 74 million in 1970.<sup>16</sup> By 1970, America was the world’s first suburban nation as census numbers counted more suburbanites than city dwellers or farmers.<sup>17</sup> The role of the automobile in the explosion of the suburbs would forever change America’s landscape. Car ownership increased exponentially as the New York Times reported in 1963, “in 1941 there were 11.4 cars for every mile of road...today the figure is 22 cars for every mile.”<sup>18</sup> The automobile needed highways and the government responded accordingly such that Congress would pass the Federal-Aid Highway

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12 Jon C. Teaford, *The Twentieth-century American City: Problem, Promise, and Reality* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1986), 97.

13 Rowe, 120.

14 David Rusk, *Cities without Suburbs* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, 1993), 7.

15 Kenneth Welch, “Regional Shopping Centers,” in *Design for Modern Merchandising: Stores, Shopping Centers, Showrooms* (New York: Architectural Record, 1962), 169.

16 Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 283-284.

17 Jackson, 284.

18 Victor Gruen, *The Heart of Our Cities; the Urban Crisis: Diagnosis and Cure* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964), 210.



Act of 1956 to build 41,000 miles of interstate freeways<sup>19</sup> connecting all cities of 50,000 people or more.<sup>20</sup> As available roadway increased, auto ownership followed. Only 610 civilian automobiles were produced in 1944, but in 1945 with the end of World War II in September, 70,000 were produced.<sup>21</sup> That number jumped to 2.15 million in 1946, to 7.9 million in 1955, and up to 9.3 million in 1965.<sup>22</sup> Pre-war patterns of travel were obliterated, taking with it prewar patterns of commerce. Those patterns that involved a trip 'downtown' for the shopping that could not be done at the limited supply stores in the suburbs were outmoded in part due to the limited amount of parking in the city centers available to those traveling from the post-war suburbs that had developed outside the reaches of mass transit. As architect Kenneth Welch recognized of city commercial centers in 1951, "limited street and parking areas cannot be economically increased to any appreciable extent in relation to floor area...only if it were possible to do this could the central district be adapted to a greater use of automobiles for business and shopping needs."<sup>23</sup> As traffic congestion in the cities increased, shopping declined causing suburban shopping centers to pick up the demand and expand both in size and number. Additionally, creating the commercial move from the city to the suburbs were the suburbanites themselves. As more of middle class America became suburban, purchasing power followed. In 1951, the median income of a household living in the city center was \$3100 while the median income in the same year for a suburban household was \$4200, 35 percent higher than their city counterparts.<sup>24</sup> This left the small strip centers and outlying franchise stores to pick up incoming business which then created a "mushrooming" of smaller neighborhood shopping centers and conveniences stores. This was a situation that the zoning

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19 Teafor, 99.

20 Roth, 460.

21 Roth, 460.

22 Roth, 460.

23 Welch, *Design for Modern Merchandising*, 171.

24 Kenneth Welch, "Regional Shopping Centers" *Architectural Record* Mar. 1951: 124.

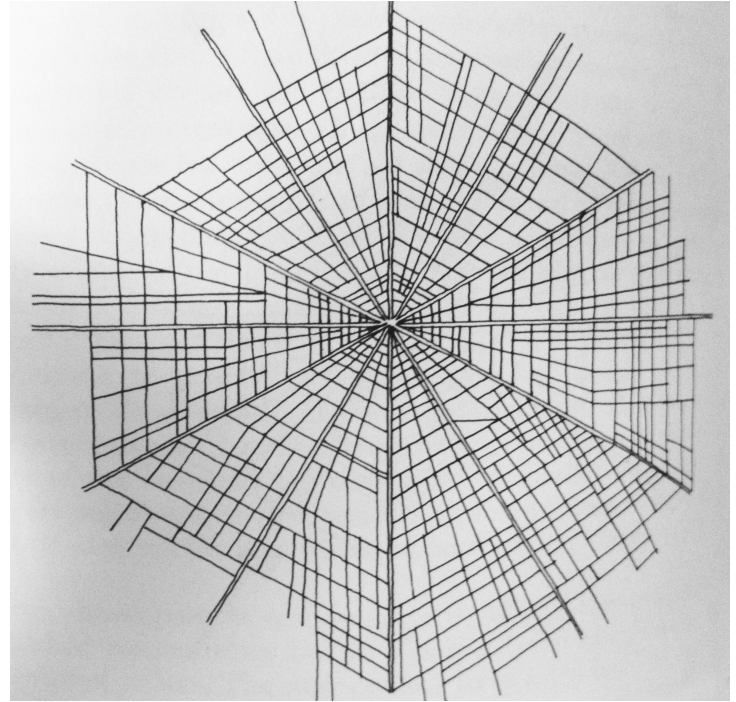
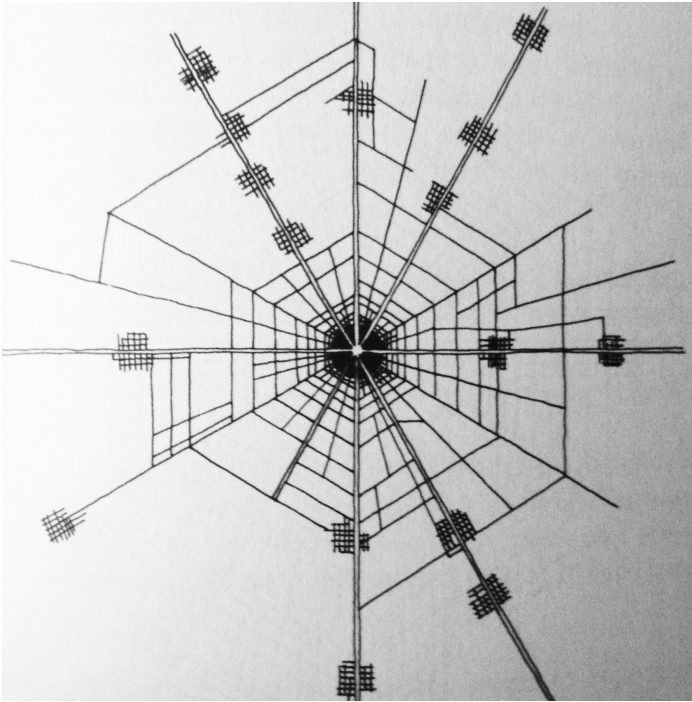
of many suburbs was not planned for, resulting in haphazard planning that created the very same level of congestion that had forced people away from city centers.<sup>25</sup> Added to this was the trend of jobs moving from cities to the suburbs where the workforce lived. As jobs moved out to the bedroom communities, suburban commercial developments took on increased demand and responded accordingly. All of these conditions put pressure on commercial development, transforming it from the strip centers of the early twentieth century into a new hybrid. Parking lots became larger and further set back from roads and shopping centers began popping up sporadically. Being devoid of any rail lines or stations that could guarantee a steady flow of traffic, merchants sited themselves along any roadways or intersections where they thought consumers might frequent. Many suburbs had a population density that was too low to prompt a mass transit connection with the city center.<sup>26</sup> This combined with the no longer linear, but rather sprawling development created by the freedom presented in the automobile meant that many consumers were left to drive into the city to do their shopping – a burden that the cities could not bear. The chaotic mixture of housing and commerce that developed in the suburbs as a result was what inspired many architects of this era to imagine a new type of commercial experience that could reorganize the chaotic development of suburbia. Architect and regional shopping center pioneer Victor Gruen termed the haphazard suburban sprawling communities the “anti-city.” Without proper centers, the anti-city is what he and many other believed would threaten the livability and workability of the suburbs.

Writing in 1964, Victor Gruen articulated the differences in growth during the prewar and postwar suburbs. Gruen’s pre-automobile urban organization identifies the city as the “main actor” from which streets, roads and rail lines radiate, serving as guidelines for development and media for communication and

25 Welch, “Regional Shopping Centers” *Architectural Record*: 121.

26 Welch, “Regional Shopping Centers,” *Architectural Record*: 121.





transport and forming small clusters at specific nodes [fig.07].<sup>27</sup> This diagram became densified as the automobile allowed for growth in all directions disregarding any original organizational schemes and propagating scattered growth.<sup>28</sup> This had its impact in patterns of commerce as well. As James Hornbeck recognized in 1960, “retailing is no longer confined to the city or town market place as it used to be; thanks to the automobile, it takes place everywhere – in the city, in the suburbs, on the open highway.”<sup>29</sup> As shopping centers moved and grew to keep up with the borderless retailing generated by the automobile, their forms also evolved. Previously stores were set back from the street by one row of parking buffered from parking spaces by a sidewalk. The post-war rise of the automobile affected the decline of pedestrian traffic and with it the need for shopping centers to be planned at a human scale. This change occurred slowly and often began with older strip centers adding on to their single row parking that existed. This

## | 07

Gruen's diagrams of prewar suburban development led by the train and trolley lines (left) and postwar suburban development fueled by the automobile (right)

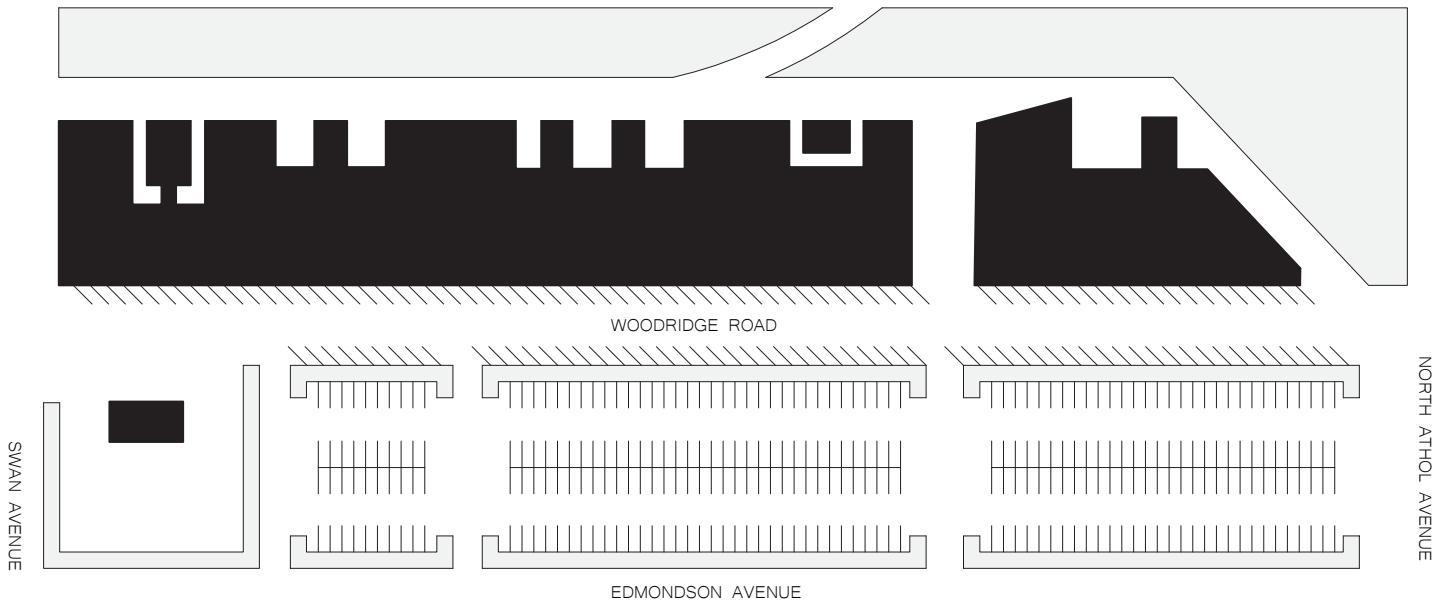
source:

Victor Gruen, *The Heart of Our Cities; the Urban Crisis: Diagnosis and Cure* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964), 269–270.

27 Gruen, *The Heart of Our Cities*, 269–270.

28 Gruen, *The Heart of Our Cities*, 270–271

29 James S. Hornbeck, *Stores and Shopping Centers* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), 95.



## 08 |

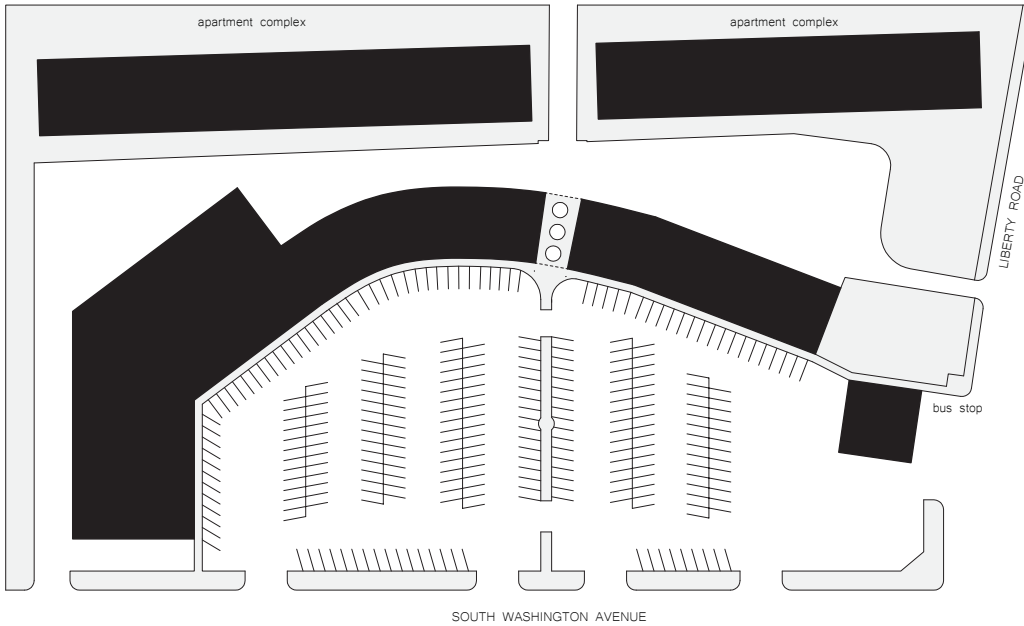
### EDMONDSON VILLAGE SHOPPING CENTER

Located in Edmondson Village, Maryland, a suburb of Baltimore, designed by Kenneth Cameron, opened in 1947. Parking lots were enlarged from a single row of parking directly in front of the stores to the parking spaces shown in the plan.

source:

adapted from Geoffrey Harold Baker, and Bruno Funaro, *Shopping Centers; Design and Operation*. (New York: Reinhold, 1951), 138.

evolution of parking space is well illustrated in the case of Edmondson Village shopping center outside Baltimore [fig.08]. When it first opened, it had a single row of parking in front of its shops with the expectation of pedestrian traffic from the nearby residential development it served. As automobile use increased, the strip center found itself outdated and began increasing its parking, eventually taking over a lot across the street resulting in a total parking space that more than tripled its original capacity. Although the Edmondson Village shopping center had to adapt to this condition, shopping centers began to be designed with these large parking lots from the outset. Edmondson Village was able to add parking to the front of its store, but for many of these street-fronted shopping strips, the simplest way to add parking was to relegate it to the rear of the building where space was more ample. This move was often chastised for its creation of back-door entrances which forced consumers to pass through service areas in order to enter and exit a store. Funaro and Baker, in their book on shopping center design, described the plight of the poor housewife forced to maneuver through trash and trucks to access the store from



## | 09

### FOSTER VILLAGE

Located in Bergenfield, New Jersey, a suburb of New York City, designed by Alan Wood Frazer, opened in 1947.

source:

adapted from Geoffrey Harold Baker, and Bruno Funaro, *Shopping Centers; Design and Operation*. (New York: Reinhold, 1951), 270.

its back parking lot.<sup>30</sup> This situation had enough of an impact on the shopping experience of suburbanites that architects began to design shopping centers set back a far enough distance from the street to accommodate all parking needs in front of the store thus allowing everyone a front door shopping experience. This had tremendous effects on the role of the human scale in these shopping centers. Foster Village, built in 1947 is an early example of the strip center evolution as it offered a solution at both the human and auto scale [fig.09]. The center was designed in an L shape with its longest façade curving out from the road to allow for greater parking space while maintaining an open arcaded pedestrian entrance to the stores from the adjacent neighborhood. The parking lot was what afforded the center the majority of its customers however as Funaro and Baker commented “adequate and free parking in this area has immense drawing power... so naturally enough it is all put out in front where it can be seen by passers-by.”<sup>31</sup> The modest scale of parking and store selection at Foster Village was dwarfed by such projects as the Broadway Crenshaw shopping center built outside

30 Baker and Funaro, 33.

31 Baker and Funaro, 271.

Los Angeles in 1947 [fig.10]. Its 10 acre parking lot and anchoring department store provided the type of consumer draw that began to inspire architects, planners, and developers to dream even bigger. Eventually shopping centers began to break from the street-oriented designs that had been inherited from the pre-war era when the pedestrian, rather than the automobile, was the unit of measurement. This gradual transformation came in the form of centers that allowed for two store fronts, one on the street side and the one on the interior of the complex, which was accomplished either by creating a double sided strip store or by breaking up blocks with several interior streets and arranging stores in a cluster format. This arrangement allowed merchants greater street presence while offering the same parking as those shopping centers set back from the street and assuring that the consumer would never enter through service areas. Shirlington shopping center in Shirlington, Virginia outside Washington D.C. was an example of this [fig.11]. Opened in 1944 with only 6 shops<sup>32</sup> by 1951 the center had added 42 more stores arranged in a cluster formation.<sup>33</sup> Some of these types evolved into the beginnings of the 'pedestrian mall scheme' as had been developed during World War II. Like the Shirlington shopping center, store fronts were presented on either side of each building, but with the addition of a landscaped mall in the place of an interior street. Concerning this early use of the mall, Victor Gruen noted, "the merchants, however, still feeling that their best interest were tied to the automobile gave main emphasis to the store "fronts" facing the parking lots...the mall was underplayed and considered principally as a short cut for the shopper who desired – after her primary purchase was made – to make secondary visits or purchases in other stores".<sup>34</sup> The strip center's departure from a street-oriented design to

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32 Martha Ellyn, "Community Problems Met with Opening of a Supermarket" *The Washington Post*, 10 July 1944: 12.

33 Gershon Fishbein, "Joseph Cherner Reveals Shirlington Plans for Expansion" *The Washington Post*, 25 Nov. 1951: 12M.

34 Victor Gruen, "Regional Shopping Centers" in *Stores and Shopping Centers* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), 104.



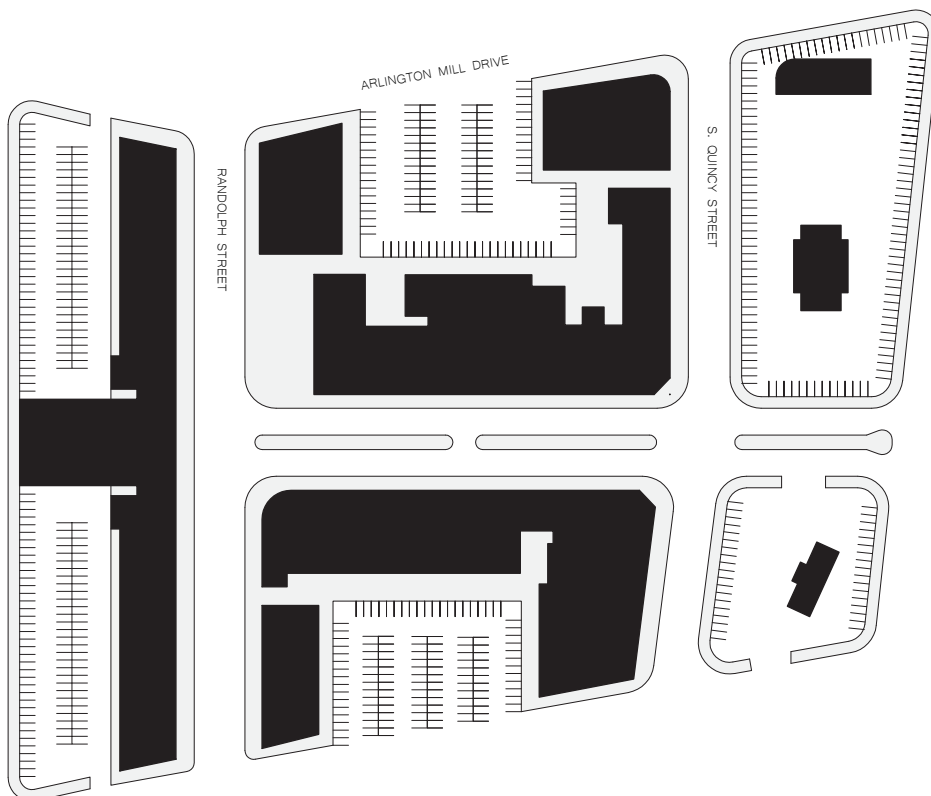
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### BROADWAY-CRENSHAW CENTER

Located in Los Angeles, California, designed by Albert B. Gardner, opened in 1947. With its 10-acre parking lot, the center approaches a new strip center type.

source:

Geoffrey Harold Baker, and Bruno Funaro, *Shopping Centers; Design and Operation*. (New York: Reinhold, 1951), 174.



## | 11

### SHIRLINGTON SHOPPING CENTER

Located in Arlington, Virginia, outside Washington D.C., designed by William N. Denton and Joseph A. Parks, opened in 1944. Originally opened with 6 stores, after the war the center expanded to 48 stores.

source:

adapted from Geoffrey Harold Baker, and Bruno Funaro, *Shopping Centers; Design and Operation*. (New York: Reinhold, 1951), 183.



the more inwardly focused subdivided plan coupled with the increased presence of department stores in the suburbs soon evolved into such widely-scoped projects as Cameron Village outside Raleigh, North Carolina [fig.12]. Completed in 1950 on 30 acres, this shopping center incorporated everything from a beauty shop to a laundromat to a supermarket and a Sears, Roebuck department store, the latter of which was perhaps the most important driver for the scheme. The compact cluster scheme in this and other similar projects was born out of a desire “to heighten the effect of cumulative drawing power”.<sup>35</sup> At Cameron Village, Sears agreed to build a department store on the condition that the developer include eight specific merchants deemed by Sears to be complementary to their department store. Those merchants included a grocery store, variety store, restaurant, drug store, theater and three service shops.<sup>36</sup> This method of creating a predetermined set of stores based on certain requirements by the department store was an important development toward the planned development that created regional shopping centers. As the success of Sears’ ventures with other cluster developments spread, the paradigm was soon picked up by other department stores as the method of incorporation caught on. These stores were still considered “sample stores,” where a limited selection of items was presented to the consumer with the potential to order from downtown what was not stocked in the store. As Hal Burton realized, “It took an organizing genius to translate this disorderly and haphazard effort into the coherent selling and shopping pattern.”<sup>37</sup> Building on the experiments and experience gained in cluster development, this “coherent selling and shopping pattern” would arise in the form of the regional shopping center.

At a meeting of the board of directors of the National Association of Retail Clothiers and Furnishers in 1954, those present were informed of the growing

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35 “Roosevelt Field Shopping Center” *Progressive Architecture*, Sept. 1955: 92.

36 Baker and Funaro, 148.

37 Hal Burton, *The City Fights Back* (New York: Citadel Press, 1954), 146.

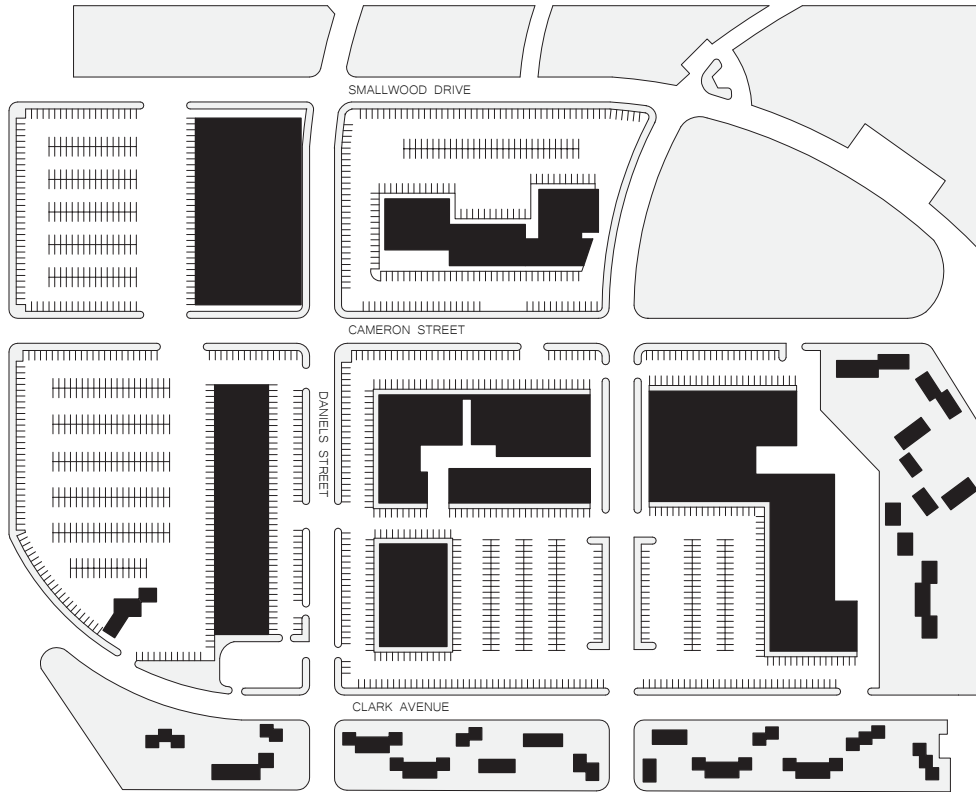
## | 12

### CAMERON VILLAGE

Located in Cameron, North Carolina, a suburb of Raleigh, designed by Leif Valand, opened in 1949. Planned to be a large cluster from the outset with Sears as its anchor.

source:

adapted from Geoffrey Harold Baker, and Bruno Funaro, *Shopping Centers; Design and Operation*. (New York: Reinhold, 1951), 154.



number of regional shopping centers in light of their not having taken full advantage of suburban opportunities with the advice that they shift with the populations.<sup>38</sup> The assumption was correct. From 1940 to 1950 in the twelve largest cities, suburban retail sales had increased 271 percent while central city retail increased only 172 percent.<sup>39</sup> Although department stores had been placing branch stores in the suburbs well before the end of World War II, providing a limited stock of what could be found in the larger 'downtown' store, as the consumer base shifted, department stores found the need to expand further into the suburbs and change their methods of delivery. Many early suburban department stores had inserted themselves in the suburbs in a similar way that one could find in the city. Macy's opened a department store in White Plains in March of 1949 along the suburb's main street, giving it the kind of pedestrian over vehicle pattern found in its downtown stores.

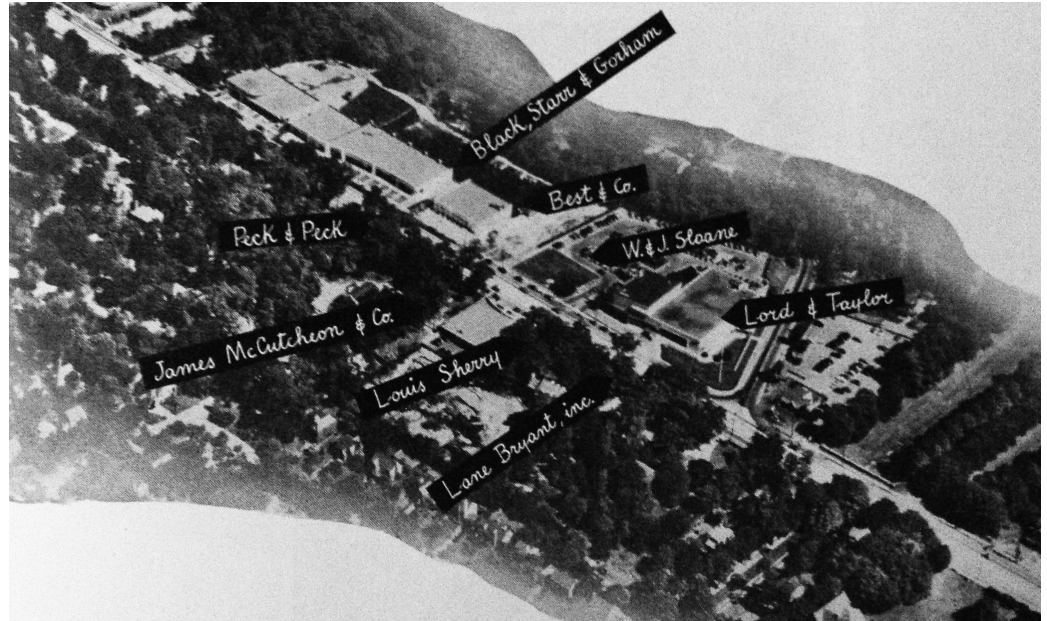
38 "Shopping Centers Seen on Increase," *New York Times*, 19 Oct. 1954: 43

39 Welch, *Design for Modern Merchandising*, 169.

A strip of department branch stores make up "Miracle Mile" in Manhasset, Long Island.

source:

Geoffrey Harold Baker, and Bruno Funaro, *Shopping Centers; Design and Operation*. (New York: Reinhold, 1951), 163.



The "Miracle Mile" in Manhasset, New York on Long Island [fig.13] achieved a similar result, with a more suburban pattern as several large department stores were lined up along the North Hempstead Turnpike with limited parking. Authors Baker and Funaro in 1951 criticized this development as being "strung out horizontally far beyond the historic limits of pedestrian shopping" and for its street orientation with insufficient parking which the authors postulate was "possibly due in large measure to the traditional thinking of most store owners".<sup>40</sup> Sears' department stores, however, would not make this mistake and presented an alternative pattern of store placement and design. Speaking of their strategy for planning their suburban stores in 1942, Sears stated, "our experience in the last ten years has proved that parking space and service facilities are more important to us than the so-called 100% location... the parking lot has been the largest single factor responsible for the success of our 'A' stores".<sup>41</sup> Unlike their competitors, Sears realized that the automobile was the shopping force of the future as they stated, "we must reiterate the paramount importance of ample parking facilities for future stores because post

40 Baker and Funaro, 163.

41 Kelley, 72.



war cars probably will be cheaper to buy and to operate, and the parking problem—even in small towns—is due to increase enormously.”<sup>42</sup> The emerging cluster scheme shopping center patterns that led to the regional shopping center was the most attractive option for their department stores and would make Sears Roebuck a “pioneering force in suburban retailing”.<sup>43</sup> Writing in 1951, Baker and Funaro noted the importance of this collision of department store development and the ever evolving shopping center, “stores follow the customer...the city department store can expand neither its building nor its parking facilities downtown...once a single department store has moved to the suburbs, others must almost inevitably follow...we are now in the evolutionary stage.”<sup>44</sup>

*The New York Times* reported in 1953, “people are prepared to expand their domestic economies...they want new things and they would like to replace old ones. ...They would do it more readily but for the difficulty of getting to the ‘downtowns’...The trip to the city and travel within the city is wearisome...noisy and not very attractive otherwise. Bringing the market to the people instead of people to the market is expected to produce a large turnover of goods...Results so far indicate a real and well-grounded change in the ways of that great institution, the American consumer.”<sup>45</sup> Referring to the work presented in the 1955 exhibition *Shopping Centers of Tomorrow*, Paul R. Williams, president of the Art Commission stated, “something very definite and important can be done through the combination of community planning and architecture to keep pace with our expanding economy, population and technology and the concurrent mounting congestion in the American city.”<sup>46</sup> The failure on the part of small neighborhood centers and stand-alone

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42 Kelley, 73.

43 Kelley, 72.

44 Baker and Funaro, 161.

45 C.B. Palmer, “The Shopping Center goes to the Shopper,” *New York Times*, 29 Nov. 1953: 39–40

46 “Shopping Centers of Tomorrow Show Slated” *Los Angeles Times*, 24 Nov. 1955: B34.

Gruen saw regional shopping centers as nodes in a network leading out from the city center.

source:

Victor Gruen, *The Heart of Our Cities; the Urban Crisis: Diagnosis and Cure* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964), 210.



franchise development to take full advantage of the immense buying power of suburbanites is what led to the emergence of a new building type and a revolution of the commercial experience – the regional shopping center.

This new building type was often heralded as creating the downtown shopping district in suburbia and was initially conceived as part of a larger network of commercial activity with the central business district at its core [fig.14]. Architect Kenneth Welch proposed, “a series of such centers...together with the central district...would serve an entire metropolitan sprawl.”<sup>47</sup> Welch believed that regional shopping centers would serve a specific segment of the metropolitan area while the downtown shopping district would be a central node for both the city and its suburbs, drawing from this larger area through mass transit. His idea brings to

47 Welch, “Regional Shopping Centers,” *Architectural Record*: 122.





mind the nodal plans of Ebenezer Howard or Frank Lloyd Wright with this idea of creating interconnected zones of housing and commerce. In a 1951 *Architectural Record* article dedicated to the new building type 'shopping center' Welch expressed his frustrations with the suburban shopping centers of his time. He blamed poor planning and outdated zoning for the "haphazard congestion" which had created the kind of chaos in the suburbs which he felt "duplicates, on a smaller scale, a number of the problems of the central districts".<sup>48</sup> Welch believed that the small neighborhood shopping centers built in the five years following the end of World War II, "are all products of antiquated zoning, often perpetuated by appeal boards not conversant with the comprehensive planning techniques so vitally needed in all central cities."<sup>49</sup> Lack of planning and research into the consumer base to determine size, needs, and potentials for smaller strip centers and branch stores led

## | 15

### NORTHLAND SHOPPING CENTER

Located in Southfield, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit, designed by Victor Gruen Associates, opened in 1954. Aerial view of Northland Center outside Detroit shows the inner focused plan with expansive parking lot.

source:

Victor Gruen, "Retailing and the Automobile," *Stores and Shopping Centers*, by James S. Hornbeck, ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), 102.

48 Welch, *Design for Modern Merchandising*, 169-170.

49 Welch, *Design for Modern Merchandising*, 172.

to what Victor Gruen termed “commercial slums” which called into need planned and controlled centers of commerce.<sup>50</sup> Architect Morris Ketchum stated, “[regional] shopping centers...prove that store groups planned for the automobile are the best means with which to recapture the concentrated customer traffic that midtown pedestrian shopping districts are losing...drive-in stores scattered along the highway can only attract customers by their own individual pulling power.”<sup>51</sup> For Ketchum, the competition offered in regional shopping centers was an enormous benefit to both consumer and merchant. Additionally, the “concentrated consumer traffic” was once more introduced by encouraging window shopping. If the shopper had only to stop and park once – a luxury not afforded in the endless ribbons of strip centers – they would be more inclined to buy and spend time. The Stonestown Shopping Center outside San Francisco was an early example of regional center design. The shopping Center was comprised of a grocery store, two department stores, one major – Emporium – and one minor, a theater, bank, medical building, auto repair shop and a church. The shopping area of the complex was organized around a mall which allowed the stores to be accessed from the street, as was customary, but also allowed customers easy access to other stores through the pedestrian mall. While the major department store and its ancillary shops were connected by means of the pedestrian mall, all other programs were separated by smaller streets that shuttle customers between various parking lots. In this early scheme, the merchant is still accustomed to seeing his consumer arrive directly outside his shop. But in an important step forward, the overall design of this center has been unified to represent itself as a complex rather than a collection of individual owner tenants.

The emergence of the regional shopping center from this long history of suburban commercial development came swiftly in the post-war era. Of the regional shopping center, the *New York Times* predicted in 1953, “The stores will

50 C.B. Palmer, “The Shopping Center goes to the Shopper”, *New York Times*: 39.

51 Morris Ketchum, *Shops and Stores* (New York: Reinhold Publisher, 1948), 267 – 271.

be the main attraction, but the presence of restaurants and recreation facilities will tend to make shopping an all-day affair. The atmosphere will be less formal... there will be no need to 'dress up,' as one does when going into the city. Not only families, but neighbors will go together."<sup>52</sup> This prediction was fulfilled in the earliest regional shopping centers of Northgate outside Seattle, Shoppers' World outside Boston and Northland outside Detroit. Ten years after opening Northland Center, his first regional shopping center outside Detroit, Victor Gruen authored a book *The Heart of Our Cities* concerned with the state of "urbia" in America; "Most of the facts that make up the urban crisis are the direct result of a man-made mess. I am convinced that man-made disorder can be straightened out by man."<sup>53</sup> In this book, Gruen articulated the problems of both suburbs and cities and used the regional shopping center as an example of a building type that he felt could cure the evils that sprawl had spread in suburbia. Gruen's ideas echo the level of optimism felt by many at the time who were looking for a solution to the chaos. The planned regional shopping center for architects of this era was the key to reorder suburbia in order to better serve the entire metropolitan region; "a new pattern of regional retail distribution is needed, based on a planned constructive decentralization...[to] take advantage of the trends, and create a new type of regional shopping center to fit the suburbs and the automobile."<sup>54</sup> Their designs and plans during the two decades following the end of World War II reflect this type of idealism with which they harnessed the long history of shopping centers in the suburbs and transformed them from scattered unplanned clusters with limited supply into "shopping towns" that had the ability to organize not just suburban commercial needs but the social life of suburbia as well.

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52 C.B. Palmer, "The Shopping Center goes to the Shopper", *New York Times*: 42.

53 Gruen, *The Heart of Our Cities*, 16.

54 Welch, *Design for Modern Merchandising*, 169 - 170.



**CHAPTER 03**

*Mall Design*

*"The shopping center is one of the few new building types which represent a response to the emergence of the automobile as a means of mass transportation. ...The center, furthermore, is the expression of a rare occurrence in our free enterprise economy – the banding together of individual businesses in cooperative fashion with the aim of creating greater commercial effectiveness through unified endeavor."*

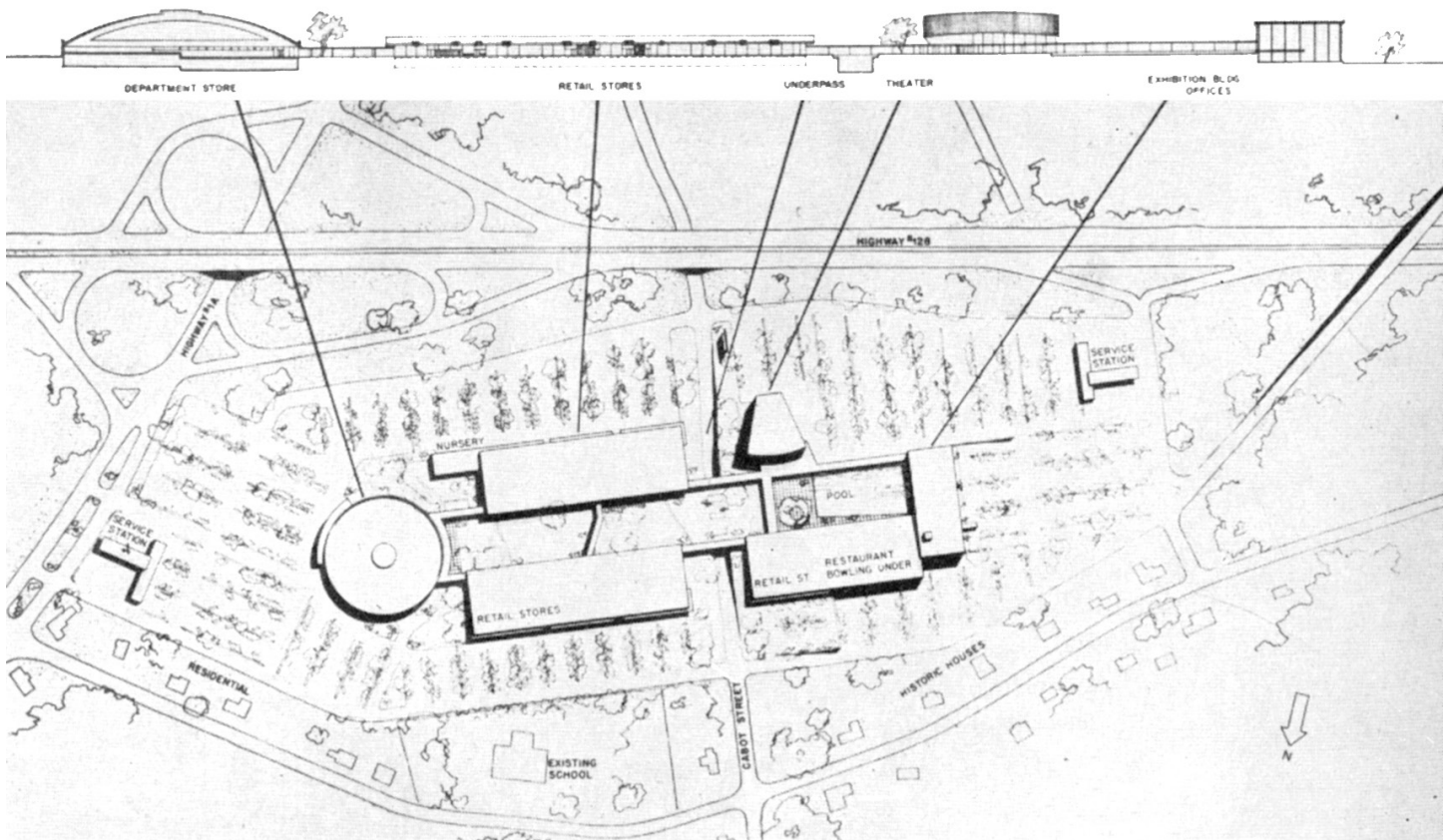
*Victor Gruen, Shopping Towns, U.S.A., 1960*

"Suburban shopping can be a pleasant experience, but seldom is. Great numbers of shopping centers, large and small, are being built across the country, but the unhappy truth is that the overwhelming majority of them are neither good to look at nor a real pleasure to use. The American genius for turning a profit seems, in suburbia, to be wedded to a distressing penchant for bringing merchandising blight to the land as part of the process. In terms of logic, convenience, or visual delight, the typical shopping center offers little. Occasional exceptions...demonstrate by contrast the validity of this judgment. Suburban shopping can be a pleasure."<sup>1</sup> This 1957 quote from James Hornbeck, editor of several books on the shopping center building type could well be describing the condition of shopping today. The type of blight committed by big box stores, strip centers, malls and the like that is railed against today are what architects of the early regional

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<sup>1</sup> James Hornbeck, "Shopping Centers" *Architectural Record*, Sept. 1957: 205.





mall hoped to remedy. To what extent they were successful can be found in the surviving examples of their projects. The difficult conclusion is that “the American genius for turning a profit” took many of their designs and stripped them down to the bare essentials needed for an economically successful enterprise. The following chapter seeks to outline the design principles that guided architects of the earliest, and in many ways the most idealistic, shopping centers.

## | PEDESTRIAN VERSUS AUTOMOBILE

In a 1954 article in the magazine *Printers' Ink*, two opposing schools of thought for the shopping center were identified as the pedestrian mall scheme and the cluster scheme. The former would take hold after regional shopping centers like Northgate, Shoppers World and Northland proved the scheme's success among consumers. It was the separation of automobile and pedestrian that secured the

## | 01

### NORTH SHORE SHOPPING CENTER

Located in Beverly, Massachusetts, a suburb of Salem, opened in 1947, designed by Ketchum, Gina & Sharp Architects. The exhibition building on the far right and the department store on the far left are connected by single story retail stores and a theater.

source:

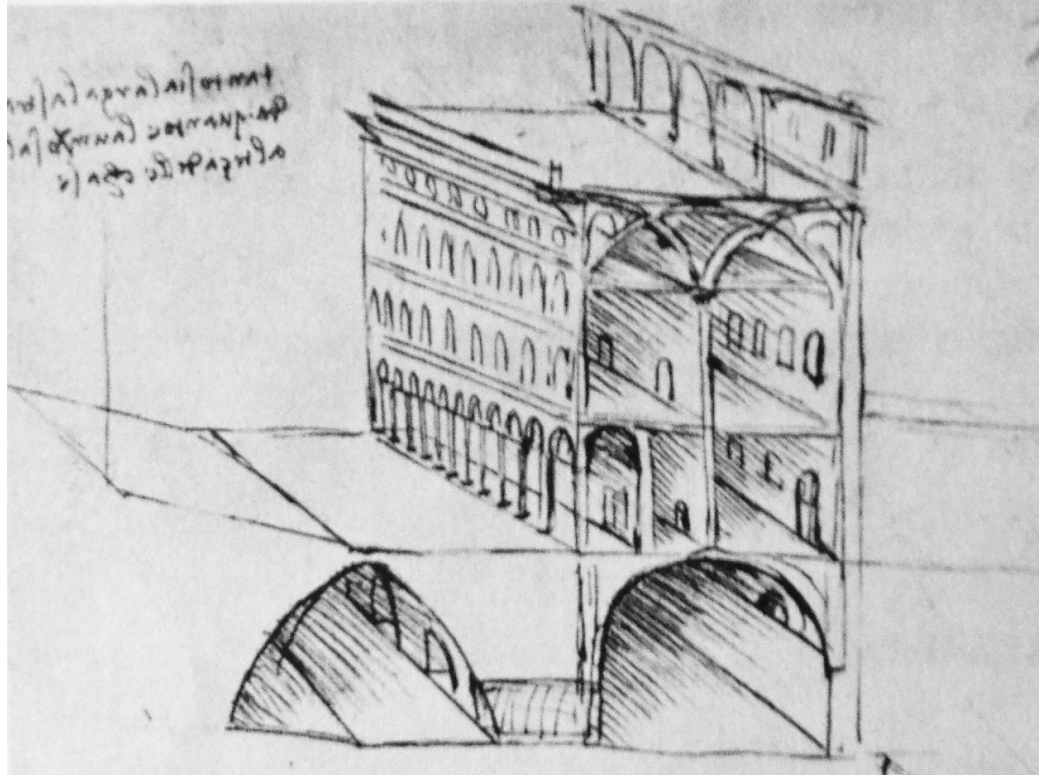
Morris Ketchum, *Shops and Stores* (New York: Reinhold Publishing, 1948), 278.

## 02 |

Sketch by Leonardo da Vinci  
include by Gruen in his arguments  
for a modern separation of  
pedestrian and auto.

source:

Victor Gruen and Larry Smith,  
*Shopping Towns USA; the Plan-  
ning of Shopping Centers*, (New  
York: Reinhold Publishers, 1960),  
18.



pedestrian mall's future as the design for regional shopping centers across America. As commented in *Architectural Record* in 1953, "The mall has many advantages for the larger center: it creates a pleasant, landscaped business street free of traffic hazard; it creates many strong locations; there is no "best side of the street"; by double-decking stores along the mall, building area can be doubled without increasing walking distance from parking."<sup>2</sup> Victor Gruen encouraged this kind of scheme, referencing a sketch made by Leonardo da Vinci [fig.02] which worked out an idea for the separation of foot and vehicular traffic with a tunnel underground for all vehicles. Architects of this new building type believed that the regional shopping center should be a structure that although created by the automobile did not succumb to it. Their designs and plans represent a moment, born out of out of "concern for the pedestrian," when designers realized that for an efficient society, the machine and the human must be segregated.<sup>3</sup> James Hornbeck, writing of the

2 James Hornbeck, *Design for Modern Merchandising*, 163.

3 Gruen, *Stores and Shopping Centers*, 101.

already well-established pedestrian mall regional shopping centers in 1960 asserted, “...the motor vehicle is here to stay. And if both business and pleasure are to benefit from it, the only course is to design both buildings and their settings...so that pedestrians, vehicles, and public transport can each move freely and expeditiously without becoming entangled or spoiling the looks and pleasantness of things.”<sup>4</sup>

It was believed by many that the regional shopping center could prevent the kind of visual, organizational and social deterioration that the chaotic network of unplanned shopping centers had created; “Well planned neighborhood shopping centers are the best insurance against neighborhood blight and decay. Uncontrolled ribbon type shopping facilities along the highway soon turn into ribbon type commercial slums. In turn, this down-grade...inevitably lowers the residential value of the surrounding land.”<sup>5</sup> Victor Gruen believed that the suburb’s greatest challenge was to overcome its repeated failure to take effective steps to remedy the chaos that was created by the automobile-scale sprawl.<sup>6</sup> The solution he saw was in the creation of distinctly separate zones for the machine and the human. In the regional shopping center he saw this solution. In these centers, the automobile and the pedestrian were allotted distinctly separate spaces. In the planning of Northland Center, opened in 1954 outside Detroit, several tenants had argued with Gruen that they would not see any business if cars were not allowed to park directly outside their doors. This “retailer-automobile honeymoon” was exactly what Gruen and others hoped to break.<sup>7</sup> Gruen believed that only when the pedestrian and his car were completely segregated could the regional shopping center hope to fulfill its role as a civic, cultural, and commercial center; “the majority of the human population group seem to be utterly confused concerning the relationship between the

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4 Hornbeck, *Stores and Shopping Centers*, 95.

5 Ketchum, 271.

6 Gruen, *The Heart of Our Cities*, 199.

7 Gruen, *Stores and Shopping Centers*, 103.



### 03 |

#### THE MALL

Located in Short Hills, New Jersey, a suburb of New York City, designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, opened in 1956. The interior pedestrian spaces are designed for the human scale.

source:

"Elegance and Restraint for Quality Tenants", in *Stores and Shopping Centers*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), 162.



human race and the automotive race, willingly acknowledging the supremacy of the automotive being, and agreeable to adjusting themselves, their cities and their lives to its demands.”<sup>8</sup> Architects and planners of the regional shopping center wanted to invert this relationship. At Northland Center outside Detroit Gruen had disproved the notion that the average consumer wished to drive up to the store of his or her choice with the least amount of walking in between. With his double height design, and the handy accident of having an identical store operating on both levels which ended up doing the same amount of business, developers and owners were sold on this new design. At Southdale Center in 1956, he took this a step further. Minnesota’s harsh climate meant that the pedestrian spaces that had attracted so many people from Detroit would be pleasant for the Minneapolis suburbanites only a few months each year. Inspired by the gallerias of Milan and Naples, Gruen

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8 Gruen, *The Heart of Our Cities*, 210.



## | 04

### ROOSEVELT FIELD SHOPPING CENTER

Located in East Garden City, Long Island, a suburb of New York City, designed by I.M. Pei Associates, opened in 1956. Varying heights of covered walkways allows for difference in experience.

source:

"America's Largest Shopping Center", in *Stores and Shopping Centers*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), 125.

moved the pedestrian malls and courtyards indoors thus allowing shoppers to enjoy a tempered space in which to gather year round. The people of Minneapolis responded overwhelmingly and the unthinkable entirely indoor design was rapidly copied across America.

James Hornbeck identified in 1957 four phases in the shopping experience that had to be specifically designed for. First, the moment in which the shopper enters the center in his automobile and parks. Second, the path which takes the shopper from the parking lot into the center and to his first store. Third, the

subsequent visits from the shoppers first store to his last stop of the trip and finally, the return from the center to his car and eventually out to the highway. These phases required various scales of design relating to both the automobile and the human. North Shore Center, opened in 1958, was devised in exactly this vein of thought [fig.01]. In order to segregate various types of traffic, the center was planned so that at the entrance and exit roads, a speed of 25 to 50 miles per hour was expected while along the peripheral road that serviced the various parking lots, a speed of 10 to 15 miles per hour was planned for with speeds below 10 miles per hour in the individual lanes of the parking rows. A speed of 4 miles per hour was then expected for foot traffic at the center's entrances and main interior circulation spaces.<sup>9</sup> The understanding of the pedestrian and vehicle as distinctly separate entities, each to be designed for in a unique way, set the regional shopping center apart from other commercial developments of the time.

## | AUTOMOBILE SCALE

The phases of the shopping trip experienced by the consumer from his vehicle required a coherent design of parking lots and the exterior appearance of the center at the scale of the machine. Although the innovation of the regional shopping center was in its ability to separate the previously indistinguishable parties, designers still understood that the shopping center had to present a face to the highway in order to greet its mechanized visitors before they entered the central shopping area. This design on the scale of an automobile was best suited for the exaggeration of the architectural elements of department stores. Creating a sloped site was preferable for its ability to give height to department stores while offering 'first floor' access with split level parking. In the articulation of the façade, the difficulty was in handling the design in such a way as to "express

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9 Ketchum, 280.



## | 05

### THE MALL

The auto-scaled facade of the department store in the background is broken up on the interior mall with human scaled architecture.

source:

"Elegance and Restraint for Quality Tenants", in *Stores and Shopping Centers*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), 160.

prestige for the whole center" without overdoing it in such a way as to make the tenant stores pale in comparison.<sup>10</sup> At Roosevelt Field, I. M. Pei commented in 1957 that the design of the exterior was given over to the center architect, "to give the impression of a planned center" while the interior store fronts were given a more individual treatment.<sup>11</sup> In the parking lots, large clusters of trees were used to break up the monotony of expansive parking lots, give some shade to those customers coming into the center, and deliver an impact statement that could be read from the distances of the highway. In addition, the groupings of trees around

10 Victor Gruen and Larry Smith, *Shopping Towns USA; the Planning of Shopping Centers*, (New York: Reinhold Publishers, 1960), 140.

11 Hornbeck, "Shopping Centers" *Architectural Record*, Sept. 1957: 207.

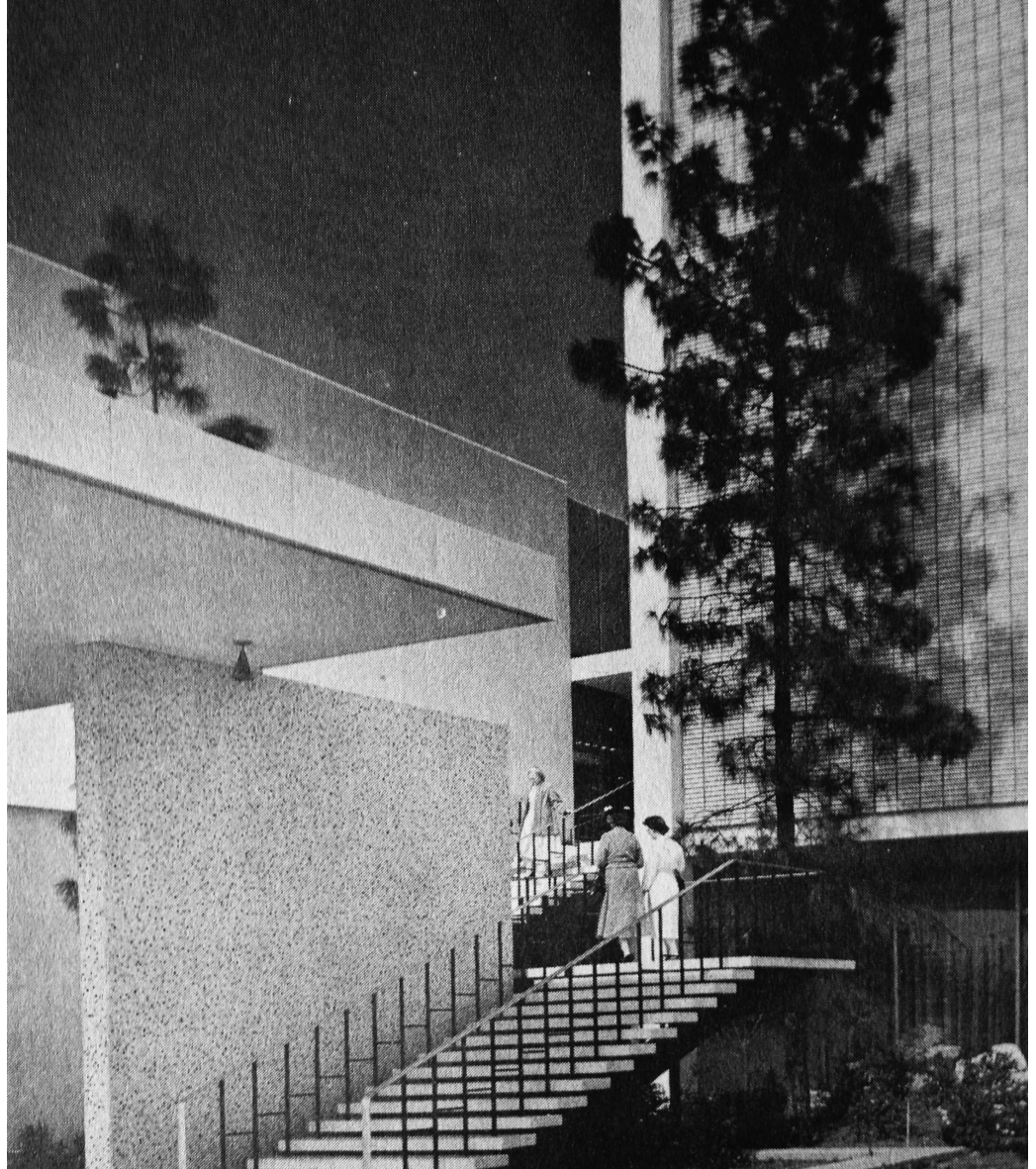


## EASTLAND SHOPPING CENTER

Located in West Covina, California, a suburb of Los Angeles, opened in 1957. The exaggerated exterior facade elements of one of the center's department stores promotes the overall design of the mall.

source:

Victor Gruen, *Shopping Towns, U.S.A.*, (New York: Reinhold Publishers, 1950), 241.



the perimeter of the shopping center created large buffer zones which provided hierarchy from highway to footpath and set shopping centers away from the highways and neighborhoods surrounding the center. The exterior landscaping remained one of the few calling cards of the regional shopping center as it along with the auto-scaled facades of the department stores was the consumer's first impression. Exterior flower beds were used to present the exterior of the center with as many readily obvious indicators as possible to achieve the most impact on customers from





## | 07

### EASTLAND CENTER

Located in Harper Woods, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit, opened in 1957. Emphasized facade divisions give rhythm to the center with this department store's design.

source:

Victor Gruen, *Shopping Towns, U.S.A.*, (New York: Reinhold Publishers, 1950), 230.

the highways and parking lot. The presence of a unified design from the center's exterior fell into the attempt at creating a cohesive environment separate from the confusion of suburban development. It was, however, the attention to the pedestrian that allowed these new buildings the most success. Richard Bennet mused in 1957, "It remains to be seen whether or not the limited view, more attention to human scale, the lure of around-the-corner, the conscious creation of a sense of adventure will contribute to... the success of the evolving American Shopping Center. I think they will."<sup>12</sup> He was of course correct as it was the attention to various scales and the conscious planning for the human apart from his car that contributed to the overall success of early regional shopping centers.

## | PEDESTRIAN SCALE

The pedestrian's shopping experience required a finer level of detail in the way in which the shopper interacted with the center at a human scale. On the interior of the regional shopping center, the pedestrian zones that had made this building type so revolutionary were treated in such a way as to respond to the various needs for a human scale. This level of detail was achieved through the use of a more intimate architectural scale as well as with various open spaces, covered open-air walkways, building scales, landscaping, exterior furniture and art. The goal of the entire pedestrian experience was to disassociate the shopper with the noise and confusion of the automobile that brought them to the center. Eastland Center outside Detroit designed by Victor Gruen was exemplary of this. A 1957 article in *Michigan Architect and Engineer* commented, "Here in the northeast Detroit suburb of Harper Woods is a completely idealized commercial and social community where potential customers are unburdened with driving and parking problems. Once within the 36 acre area of stores, landscaped plazas, fountains, sculpture and park benches, shoppers are free and safely separated from the

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12 Richard Bennett, "Shopping Centers," in *Stores and Shopping Centers*, 94.





## | 08

### OLD ORCHARD SHOPPING CENTER

Located in Skokie, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago, designed by Loeb, Scholssman & Bennett, opened in 1956. A serpentine pool winds through the malls.

source:

"Garden Setting Lends Charm to Suburban Center" in *Stores and Shopping Centers*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), 134.



## THE MALL

Planned signage at The Mall in  
Short Hills, New Jersey.

source:

Edward Larrabee Barnes, "Control  
of Graphics Essential to Good  
Shopping Center Design," in  
*Stores and Shopping Centers*.  
(New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962),  
91.



automobiles that bring them there.”<sup>13</sup>

In the design of the architecture of a center, careful attention was paid to creating a diverse environment that, unlike the oversized character of the center's exterior, could respond to the human scale. By adjusting the heights of covered walkways, adding screens to some and leaving others open, and by varying the dimensions of the various open spaces, shoppers were afforded an ever changing environment that appealed to their desire for a human scale, made apparent by the overwhelming success and eventual dominance of the pedestrian mall scheme. In the single tenant stores, designs were approached with an effort toward the unity of the center as a whole, "Such special buildings afford an opportunity for a change of pace, in which case it should be in the nature of a variation of the main theme".<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Mike Kraft, "Eastland, the Multi-Million Dollar Shopping Center," *Michigan Architect and Engineer*, Aug. 1957: 10.

<sup>14</sup> Gruen and Smith, *Shopping Towns USA*, 141.



## | 10

### MID-ISLAND PLAZA

Located in Hicksville L.I., New York, a suburb of New York City, opened in 1956. A variety of pedestrian-scaled spaces compliments the facade design of Gertz department store.

source:

Victor Gruen, *Shopping Towns, U.S.A.*, (New York: Reinhold Publishers, 1950), 246.

These buildings allowed for the center to avoid the appearance of monotony while presenting an opportunity for an architectural statement. The store design for the multiple-tenant structures had to be both more and less uniform. In its overall structure and rhythm, the buildings had to be adaptable to a variety of store types. For the tenant stores at Roosevelt Field, an exposed steel grid gave the center a rhythmic pattern within which individual store design was planned to give variety to the shopping experience.<sup>15</sup> In the treatment of each individual storefront, the

15 "Roosevelt Field Shopping Center" *Progressive Architecture*, Sept. 1955: 97.

expression of the store was given more freedom to be interpreted within the graphic standards applied by the center's architect. The issue of graphic control was given much attention by early architects. Generous ceiling heights were encouraged both for the advantage of greater space for signage on the store fronts and also for the overall effect on the prestige of the center, "Low ceiling heights will result in an insignificant exterior appearance...detrimental to the impression of the center as a whole."<sup>16</sup> The revolution of the regional shopping center was in its ability to organize individual merchants under one owner thus promoting the idea that, "Individual wishes and needs must be secondary to the needs and requirements of the center as a whole."<sup>17</sup> In terms of store treatment, this mantra was treated differently depending on the architect in charge. Gruen believed neither in complete freedom in store design nor in the entire regimentation of store fronts. Instead he advocated for establishing a framework that would regulate the dimensions of parapets and overhangs, abolish the use of attached or protruding signs in favor of placing store markers within controlled frames, create a buffer zone between stores to avoid the overlap in designs, and the regulation of text, materials, and construction methods.<sup>18</sup> Edward Larrabee Barnes believed, "The major obstacle to good architecture in shopping centers is the sign...all one really sees is the clash of conflicting advertising, with each tenant trying to shout louder than the next."<sup>19</sup> His solution was to create unity with integrated signage through the discipline of material choice. Victor Gruen identified eight types of spaces that could be used to achieve this variability; plazas and squares, walks and lanes, courts, malls, arcades and terraces.<sup>20</sup> As Barnes recognized, the effect of the architecture of a regional shopping center was entirely to set the scene for activities of the center as

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16 Gruen and Smith, *Shopping Towns USA*, 142.

17 Victor Gruen, "Shopping Centers" *Architectural Record*, June 1952: 70.

18 Gruen and Smith, *Shopping Towns USA*, 145-146

19 Edward Larrabee Barnes, "Control of Graphics Essential to Good Shopping Center Design," in *Stores and Shopping Centers*, 90.

20 Gruen and Smith, *Shopping Towns USA*, 150.





## | 11

### MAYFAIR SHOPPING CENTER

Located in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, a suburb of Milwaukee, opened in 1958, designed by Perkins & Will and Grassold-Johnson Associates. Landscaping in the interior mall at encourages relaxation between stores.

source:

"Inner-Directed Regional Center" in *Stores and Shopping Centers*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), 152.



## | 12

### OLD ORCHARD SHOPPING CENTER

Curving lawns at Old Orchard Shopping Center.

source:

"Garden Setting Lends Charm to Suburban Center" in *Stores and Shopping Centers*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), 132.

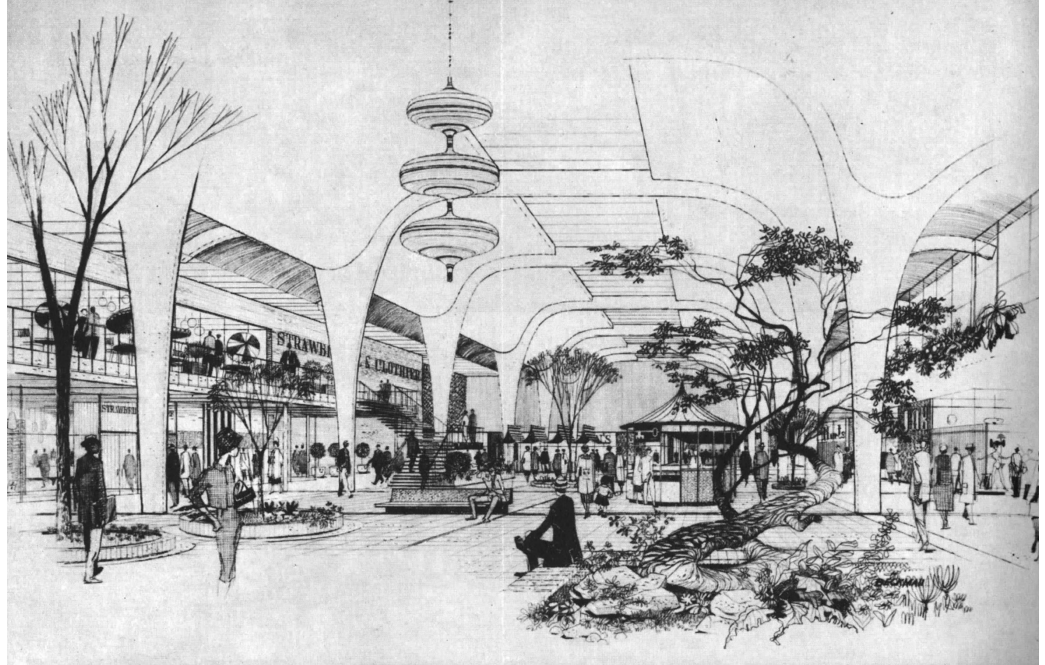


## CHERRY HILL SHOPPING CENTER

Located in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, a suburb of Philadelphia, designed by Victor Gruen Associates, opened in 1961. A lush indoor landscape gives character to the central mall in this concept sketch.

source:

Victor Gruen, "Retailing and the Automobile", in *Stores and Shopping Centers*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), 106.



he made the comparison, "On the Greek island of Mykonos the continuous white walls and roofs and pavements of the village dramatize the ikon in the church or a geranium in a window. Here – on the commercial level – the same principle of continuity will apply. The architecture will become a backdrop for activity."<sup>21</sup>

## | DESIGNED FOR LEISURE

The innovation of exclusively pedestrian areas was not enough to elevate the regional shopping center above previous commercial developments. The pedestrian zones that made its design so revolutionary had to be specifically designed for leisure. Architects and planners clearly recognized the implications of making shopping an enjoyable experience, as Gruen articulated "the environment should be so attractive that customers will enjoy shopping trips, will stay longer and return more often."<sup>22</sup> Architects wanted the spaces within the regional shopping center to resemble marketplaces of the past in way they functioned as social incubators. Following this precedent, the regional shopping center was designed for the type

21 Barnes, *Stores and Shopping Centers*, 91.

22 Gruen and Smith, *Shopping Towns USA*, 146.





## | 14

### CHERRY HILL SHOPPING CENTER

The interior landscaping is achieved in much the same way as its outdoor predecessors as light is brought in through a louvered skylight.

source:

"Enclosed Mall with an Outdoor Feeling", in *Stores and Shopping Centers*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), 164.

of community life architects and planners hoped to bring to the suburbs, "we must try to remember the important and vibrant role our town squares have played... We must sensitively observe the colorful, stimulating, and commercially busy urban scenes in the market squares in Central European cities."<sup>23</sup> These colorful and stimulating environments had to, of course, be translated into a uniform, visually coherent scheme. In store designs, there was no room for the "anarchy" of main streets, the design had to find the ideal balance between this and the regimented design in which everything was the same. The more variable environments therefore came in the form of plant life, landscaping features, music, social programs and the

23 Gruen and Smith, *Shopping Towns USA*, 147.

placement of artwork, each meant to reward all the senses.<sup>24</sup>

The landscaping of regional shopping centers was meant to provide the variability experienced in the types of historic markets designers hoped to emulate. Store design required coherency to ensure a level playing field and to discourage from add-ons like signs, posters and other advertisements. Landscaping offered a unifying element that could achieve this coherency while it softened the architecture and lent character to the variety of pedestrian zones meant for different types of activities. As the pedestrian mall scheme began with its attention directed toward the integration of a single landscape element – the mall – subsequent pedestrian mall schemes further developed the mall with the addition of a variety of open spaces complemented by different plant types as well as fountains, ponds and sculpture. Using Roosevelt Field Shopping Center as an example, landscape architect Robert Zion wrote in 1957, “the landscape architect has, in the shopping center, an unusual opportunity to contribute richly to a collaborative effort with architect and engineer”.<sup>25</sup> I. M. Pei said of the overall design of Roosevelt Field’s outdoor spaces, “the shoppers route leads him through streets of different widths and varying architectural treatments, affording a variety of experience” with landscape design creating the atmosphere.<sup>26</sup> To create this atmosphere, Zion divided his treatment of the landscaping elements into five categories; floorscape, plant material, flowers, parking area planting, and waterworks. In the case of the floorscape, Zion demonstrated the importance of pavement design to the experience of the shopper, and thus the success of the center. With the vast open spaces offered in the pedestrian mall scheme, simply paving it over with an expanse of a single material would have destroyed any attempts at a variability of

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24 Gruen and Smith, *Shopping Towns USA*, 148.

25 Robert Zion, “The Landscape Architect and the Shopping Center”, *Landscape Architecture*, Oct. 1957: 7.

26 Hornbeck, “Shopping Centers,” *Architectural Record*, Sept. 1957: 207.

space. The pavement had to be designed in such a way as to combat fatigue and boredom by creating hierarchy and visual appeal. At Roosevelt Field, Zion used four different paving types; hexagonal and rectangular asphalt pavers, as well as natural stone tile and cobblestone. The hexagonal pavers were used extensively throughout the entire shopping center to create a texture that varied from the rectilinear forms of the center's buildings. This sea of 9 inch hexagonal pavers was broken up by lines of rectangular pavers that reflected the column grid of the buildings so as to create bays of hexagonal pavers that mirrored the bays of buildings. The effect was one that created a rhythmic unity throughout the center. This system was then interrupted by occasional "rugs" of natural stone tile within which were placed seating areas for rest and relaxation. This same method was employed at Old Orchard shopping center outside Chicago, Illinois. In this center, the main paving was concrete infused with pebbles to create texture and variety. The concrete paving was organized into a grid by bands of brick placed to continue the center's bays. The interruption of the grid in this center came in the form of a serpentine pool that winds its way through the center and creates moments for rest along its edges. Seating areas provided in these types of centers were given much attention. It was understood that in a similar way that pedestrian paths were given variability, so must the areas for rest and relaxation. Thus spaces for groups and individuals, families and couples as well as spaces in different types of environments such as shaded or full-sun locations, those near water, and those near places for children to play were all planned accordingly. Additionally, these places of quiet rest or group activity had to be planned so as not to become an obstacle to pedestrians. Areas of rest and paths of circulation were planned to complement each other so as to fall into the precise choreography that fulfilled James Hornbeck's motto "shopping should be fun".<sup>27</sup>

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27      Hornbeck, "Shopping Centers," *Architectural Record*, Sept. 1957: 205

With special regard to planting beds, Gruen commented, “their size should be limited but their number can be great...[and] the use of colored brick, tile and stone wall constitute welcome relief within the main pavement area.”<sup>28</sup> Monotony was to be avoided at all costs and nothing produced monotony more than miles of un-shaded colorless walks and squares. Not only did planting beds introduce excitement and beauty they offered a place to rest and converse. They had to be used, however, in such a way as to provide carefully crafted interruptions to the visual coherence that defined the regional shopping center, within a predetermined system so as not to fall into the category of clutter. As such, all components of the design from trash receptacles to bicycle racks had to be “regarded as an integral part of the design program.”<sup>29</sup> For plant life, each species had to be chosen “entirely in an architectural manner”.<sup>30</sup> The trees employed at Roosevelt Field were thus meant to break up larger spaces and signify areas of circulation or rest. Zion separates his discussion of flowers from “plant material,” advising on the use of flowers within removable tubs so as to reduce the amount of maintenance needed between growing seasons. The exception to this were large flower beds placed at the entrances to the center needed to communicate the lush plant life of the interior at the auto scale. The use of water, in particular fountains, at Roosevelt Field allowed the plazas to “artificially create a crowding of the shoppers, thereby introducing excitement into the shopping experience” which was then added to by the sounds and coolness created by the fountains.<sup>31</sup> At Eastland Center the aims were similar, “This blending of competitive stores with the informal relaxed atmosphere of a park [is] provided by the trees, sculpture and shaded areas” meant to reinforce a

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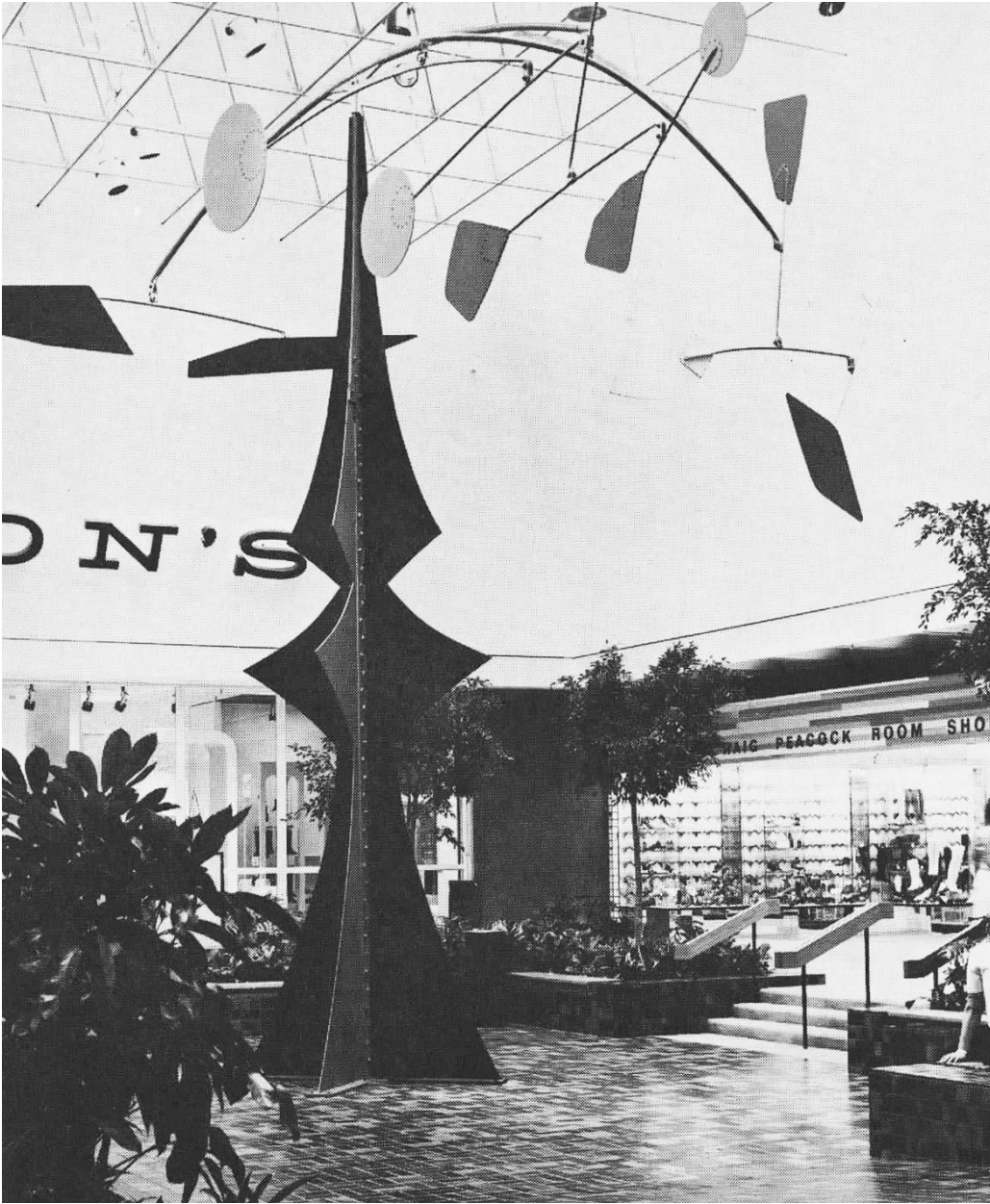
28 Gruen and Smith, *Shopping Towns USA*, 153.

29 Gruen and Smith, *Shopping Towns USA*, 153.

30 Zion, “The Landscape Architect and the Shopping Center,” *Landscape Architecture*, Oct. 1957: 10.

31 Kraft, “Eastland, the Multi-Million Dollar Shopping Center,” *Michigan Architect and Engineer*, Aug. 1957: 11.





## | 15

### FRANKLIN PARK MALL

Located in Toledo, Ohio, designed by Louis G Redstone Architects, opened in 1971. Sculpture by Alexander Calder.

source:

Louis G. Redstone, *New Dimensions in Shopping Centers and Store*, (New York: McGraw Hill, 1973), 86.

culture of leisure through landscape.<sup>32</sup> Eastland featured two fountains, 14 acres of lawn and approximately 50,000 planting of trees, shrubs, annuals, perennials and ground cover.<sup>33</sup> This excessive amount of landscaping is simply proof of the effect of green space to accomplish the creation of a space that could inspire

32 Kraft, "Eastland, the Multi-Million Dollar Shopping Center," *Michigan Architect and Engineer*, Aug. 1957: 15.

33 "The New Eastland Shopping Center" *The Michigan Society of Architects*, Sept. 1957: 40.

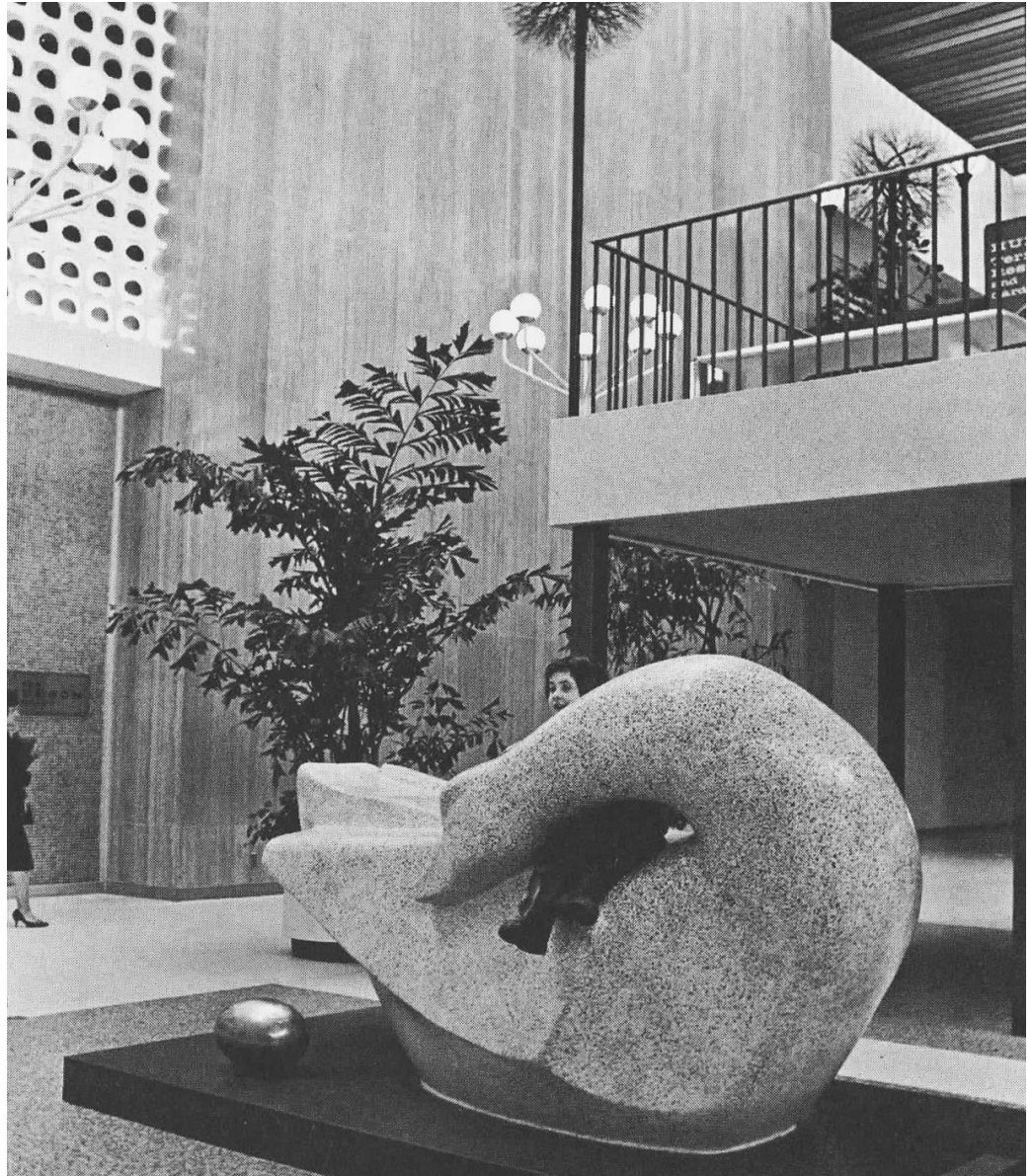


## WESTLAND SHOPPING CENTER

Located in Westland, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit, designed by Victor Gruen Associates, opened in 1965. Play sculpture by artist, Samuel Cashwan.

source:

Louis G. Redstone, *New Dimensions in Shopping Centers and Store*, (New York: McGraw Hill, 1973), 85.



community life. Edward Eichstedt of landscaping architecture firm Eichstedt-Johnson Associates described the informal arrangements of trees and plants within planting boxes as a way to achieve “a light-hearted theme” while the specific trees were chosen with special attention to the sculptural form of each tree’s silhouette.<sup>34</sup> Overall, the use of these various elements of landscape design was meant to complement and bolster the architectural aims of the center by creating

34 Kraft, “Eastland, the Multi-Million Dollar Shopping Center,” *Michigan Architect and Engineer*, Aug. 1957: 19.

a finer level of detail for the human-scaled activities that the arcades, plazas and malls encouraged. By designing for leisure, the shopper was given the opportunity to rest and contemplate – a luxury that could only be afforded by an environment that separated the human from his means of transport.

The use of art in these regional malls was a significant achievement that allowed the regional shopping center to truly reinvent the commercial model. Not meant to portray art in a museum setting, it was meant to engage with the public – sometimes literally in the case of the children’s play sculptures at Northland and Eastland shopping malls – in order that the relationship be active. Art set the atmosphere. By creating such an environment, Gruen believed that the opportunity for direct contact with art made the regional shopping center an anomaly in suburbia that lent it a civic function that furthered this culture of leisure; “the developer is given the function of a support and encourager of the arts [which] the architect should urge him to accept...as an extension of his civic responsibility.”<sup>35</sup> The display of such art, Gruen warned, should not fall into a standard museum-like arrangement, but rather it should be integrated into the center like every other element, “making art, architecture and landscape a living, meaningful whole.”<sup>36</sup> At Northland Center, the art program was outlined to state that, due to the nature of the shopping center as a place for families – more specifically women and children – “it was not the place to portray drama, heroism, or tragedy; on the contrary, humor, color, movement, light heartedness, were given as thematic guides.”<sup>37</sup> The atmosphere of the shopping centers and the art were meant to reinforce each other. At the entrance to Northland Center, a sculptural fountain by Lily Saarinen greeted visitors with an energetic display. Inside, another sculptural fountain by artist Richard Hall entitled “Water Mobile”

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35 Gruen and Smith, *Shopping Towns USA*, 153.

36 Gruen and Smith, *Shopping Towns USA*, 153.

37 Gruen and Smith, *Shopping Towns USA*, 154.

had moving parts that created an ever changing and lively atmosphere. At nearby Eastland Center, the art program at Northland that had been a difficult sell to the developers was insisted upon by the owner as it was quickly recognized that the integration of such socially elevated pieces contributed greatly to the shopping experience.<sup>38</sup> A perforated metal screen at the Eastland shopping center by artist Lindsey Decker cast light and shadow as pedestrians passed through a covered walk. Gruen noted that “shopping malls provide opportunities for diversified activity” of which he gave the examples of children climbing play sculptures by artist William McVey. All use of art, according to Gruen, was meant to enliven the experience of the shopper and contribute to the attempt to make shopping ‘fun’. Music was part of that agenda as well, as a 1957 article reported, “... with speakers strategically located throughout the malls, courts and plazas to reach the shoppers as they go between buildings or relax on benches, the music contributes to the relaxed informal atmosphere of Eastland. Here, the electrical system contributes more than just efficiency to the Center that is ‘designed for people’.”<sup>39</sup> At Roosevelt Field shopping center, artwork took a further civic role to commemorate the flight of Charles Lindbergh. Being that the shopping center was situated upon the airfield from which his plane had taken off, the site was appropriate, but it was the current use of the site that most excited the artist. When asked how he felt about his sculpture being placed at a shopping center, artist Bjorn Earling Evensen replied “It was my choice. It is the best place I can imagine, because the shopping center is the reality of today – the traffic, the thousands of people. And it is only starting from reality that the imagination can soar.”<sup>40</sup>

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38 Gruen, *The Heart of Our Cities*, 202.

39 Kraft, “Eastland, the Multi-Million Dollar Shopping Center,” *Michigan Architect and Engineer*, Aug. 1957: 20.

40 Bruce Bliven, “Two Dedications,” *The New Yorker* 8 June 1981: 37.



What made these regional shopping centers so unique was the way in which each facet of the design was treated as integral to the overall appearance and atmosphere of the entire complex. From trash receptacle design to department store facade treatment, each unit held absolute importance. The quality of space created by the landscaping of these complexes was extraordinary. Unlike the sparsely planted malls today, the landscaping went beyond plant life to reinforce the overall architectural expression of space through an integrated conceptual approach to space creation. The variety of public open spaces provided in these malls also set them apart from other shopping complexes, like those designed in cluster formations. With the use of plazas, malls and arcades, a multitude of experiences was presented to the shopper, each designed – through the architecture, landscaping, signage, and every other element – to convey a distinct atmosphere. Whether it was the heightening of the shopping experience through the use of arcades and fountains or the quiet spaces meant to provide rest and realization through the use of large shade trees and wide plazas, the mall redefined the commercial environment. While many of these malls today have been drastically altered, the extent to which they still exhibit this integrated approach to design and the adherence to a variable shopping environment they may still be considered significant examples of this revolutionary approach to commercial architecture.



## **CHAPTER 04**

*Mall Culture*

*"Today's shopping center has an opportunity to give us again that desirable gather place, planned in a coordinated fashion, for the automobile age. In the first excitement of the industrial revolution we temporarily lost our feeling for planning, organization, and architectural beauty. The modern shopping center is a clear expression of the desire to regain these advantages, translating past experiments into forms suitable for our mechanized life."*

*Victor Gruen, Architectural Record, 1952*

## | REINVENTING THE MARKETPLACE

Those architects involved in the discussion and creation of the regional shopping center identified it as the new suburban building type to fulfill the cultural role played by city markets of the past. They did not take this association lightly, and specifically designed the regional shopping center to play a pivotal role in the social rituals of suburbia. Victor Gruen, in many of his writings on the subject of shopping malls, identifies the regional shopping center as a modern descendent of ancient spaces of commerce and social interaction. He claims precedence in the historic models of the Greek agora, medieval markets, and early American town squares and expounds on the necessities of such places for the proper functioning of any community; "With the advent of the large shopping center there will be a new outlet for that primary human instinct to mingle with other humans".<sup>1</sup> Richard

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<sup>1</sup> Victor Gruen, "Shopping Centers: the New Building Type," *Architectural Record*, June 1952:



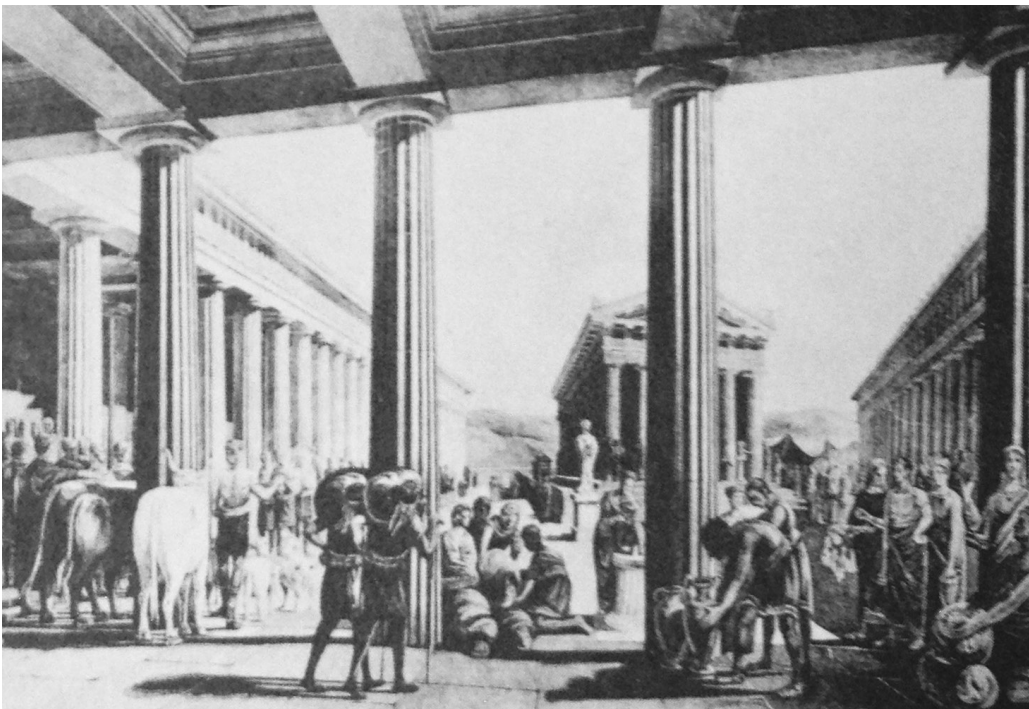
## | 01

### ROOSEVELT FIELD SHOPPING CENTER

The central mall spaces hosts a variety of people and activities.

source:

"America's Largest Shopping Center", in *Stores and Shopping Centers*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), 122.



## | 02

Illustration of a Greek Agora used by Gruen to illustrate his ideas of the ancient marketplace.

source:

Victor Gruen and Larry Smith, *Shopping Towns USA; the Planning of Shopping Centers*, (New York: Reinhold Publishers, 1960), 18.

Bennett, writing of shopping centers in 1957, found precedence in village plans, as well as in the entertainment and social activities of amusement parks and carnivals.<sup>2</sup> Ketchum found precedence in American farmhouses; “Living quarters, factory, warehouse, and retail store were all combined in a single building and its surrounding sheds and barns. ...Such farms were the heart of life on the frontier.”<sup>3</sup> In regional shopping centers, the civic and cultural functions of ancient commercial spaces would be translated for a modern age with the integrated planning of band shells, theaters, and other amenities available for public use. In the same way that the Greek citizen in the Agora “transacted their business [and] did their marketing while philosophers, poets, and entertainers argued, recited and performed”, the suburbanites, created by and operating within an auto-centric society would look to the regional shopping center as a place “to have social meetings, relax together, [and] enjoy art, music, civic activities and entertainment in the company of others”.<sup>4</sup> Gruen, born and raised in Vienna, Austria, believed that American cities had eliminated all forms of precedence from earlier eras of pedestrian life and therefore encouraged designers to look to European markets to understand the vital role community played in the success of commercial endeavors; “we must sensitively observe...the market squares in Central European cities in order to understand the contribution to community life the open spaces in our new shopping towns can make.”<sup>5</sup> Speaking to his colleagues, Gruen inserts the word ‘town’ for the word ‘center’ in describing the regional mall. This substitution figures as the name of the book in which this quote is found, *Shopping Towns, USA*, and triggers the type of association that Gruen hoped would develop in regional shopping centers through design. The concept of regional shopping center as “town” was taken on in every sense of the word as the most visionary of mall architects of the post-war era

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69-70.

2       Hornbeck, *Stores and Shopping Centers*, 93.

3       Ketchum, 3.

4       Gruen and Smith, *Shopping Towns USA*, 18,

5       Gruen and Smith, *Shopping Towns USA*, 147.





### | 03

#### ROOSEVELT FIELD SHOPPING CENTER

Seating for group interaction at Roosevelt Field Shopping Center.

source:

"America's Largest Shopping Center", in *Stores and Shopping Centers*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), 130.

focused on creating the aspects that would transcend the regional shopping center from a commercial to civic endeavor. This was the intention with which many a "mall" was built.

### | ACCIDENTAL CAPITALS

Writing of the American 'mall' in 1985, journalist William Kowinski pays a visit to the Roosevelt Field Shopping Center and admits shock at discovering a list of non-commercial functions that one could find at the center. Completed in 1957,

## EASTLAND SHOPPING CENTER

Dancing in the center's various  
malls.

source:

Victor Gruen, *Shopping Towns,  
U.S.A.*, (New York: Reinhold  
Publishers, 1950), 261.



Roosevelt Field was the largest shopping center in the world when it opened. The shopping center was planned to be a civic center with its lower concourse of meeting rooms, radio broadcasting studio, art center, and a building products display center. For Kowinski to admit shock to this vast array of programs perhaps signals how far the regional shopping center has fallen from its initial conception. More importantly, however, it displays the type of care given to the intentional responsible social design in these early centers. Of the functions operating at Roosevelt Field in 1985, Kowinski lists the Nassau County headquarters for the Girl Scouts of America, the Long Island Catholic supply, and an office of the National Leukemia Foundation. Kowinski concludes that “malls have become the accidental capitals of suburbia”.<sup>6</sup> Although his conclusion that regional shopping centers of the likes of Roosevelt Field function as “capitals” to the suburbs in which they are sited is unmistakable, this was hardly an accident. In a 1954 article concerning the emerging dominance of regional centers, Genevieve Smith comments “the shopping

<sup>6</sup> William Severini Kowinski, *The Mall of America: An inside Look at the Great Consumer Paradise* (New York: W. Morrow, 1985), 139.



center of the future will be more than a commercial center. It will also be a civic and cultural center.”<sup>7</sup> Referencing architect Morris Ketchum of Ketchum, Gina & Sharp, who claimed that churches would eventually become integrated into the regional shopping centers, Smith makes the point that these commercial endeavors were growing beyond their initial program to become the “capitals” to which Kowinski refers. Victor Gruen had also prefigured this and had asserted in 1960, after considerable success of his own, that if planned correctly the regional shopping center “will bring into being community facilities...with the express intention of creating an environment which, if properly utilized, will establish the shopping center as the focal point for the life of a community.”<sup>8</sup> In 1954, Sidonie Gruenberg of the *New York Times*, made the observation of the lack of community exhibited in the suburbs of his era; “Many of the new mass produced suburbs are communities only in the sense that they are aggregates of dwellings, often identical type houses.”<sup>9</sup> The regional shopping center was in many ways conceived as a remedy for this. In the suburbs of Long Island, Roosevelt Field shopping center was built to service the suburbs “where community facilities have not kept pace with the fantastic mushrooming of residential housing.”<sup>10</sup> In a 1955 article describing the new center, *Progressive Architecture* commented, “fortunately, the foresighted clients and architects of this shopping center have recognized the challenge and... have gone beyond the bare provision of shops... [to] provide places for assembly and community recreation in a spirited and coordinated architectural setting.”<sup>11</sup> Victor Gruen saw the community aspect of the shopping center as paramount, “The modern shopping center will become a center for social, cultural, and recreational life, in addition to its primary function of a shopping facility...it will serve as a

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7 Genevieve Smith, “Regional Shopping Grows Fast,” *Printers Ink*, 14 May 1954: 38.

8 Gruen and Smith, *Shopping Towns USA*, 257.

9 Sidonie M. Gruenberg, “Homogenized Children of New Suburbia,” *New York Times*, 19 Sept. 1954: 14.

10 “Roosevelt Field Shopping Center.” *Progressive Architecture*, Sept. 1955: 92.

11 “Roosevelt Field Shopping Center.” *Progressive Architecture*, Sept. 1955: 92.

## STONESTOWN SHOPPING CENTER

Located in San Francisco,  
California, opened in 1952.  
Visitors listen to Hawaiian music  
in the center's mall.

source:

Victor Gruen, *Shopping Towns,  
U.S.A.*, (New York: Reinhold  
Publishers, 1950), 259.



community center and in so doing will bring more people on its premises and keep them there for longer periods of time. It will, in short, be a boon to the social and cultural life of the community and a financial success to its tenants and investors.”<sup>12</sup> Morris Ketchum had a similar attitude toward shopping centers of the time, though his planning vision had not yet taken the form in which his ideas would manifest at Shoppers World, one of the first regional shopping centers built outside Boston, Massachusetts. In recognizing the need for a social function in shopping centers, Ketchum stated, “shops and stores alone are not enough in themselves to create a well balanced shopping center...it is advisable to integrate other business, civic, and institutional buildings together ...the surrounding community then has a definite, well organized center of all its activities.”<sup>13</sup> Ketchum’s attitude toward the healing power of the regional shopping center was not simply that of creating a civic center. Ketchum and others believed that it was within the power of the regional shopping

12 Victor Gruen, “Planned Shopping Centers,” *Dun’s Review*, May 1953: 115.

13 Ketchum, 271.



## | 06

### NORTHLAND SHOPPING CENTER

Visitors flock to Sports Festival held at Northland

source:

Victor Gruen, *Shopping Towns, U.S.A.*, (New York: Reinhold Publishers, 1950), 261.

center to elevate the quality of suburban life; “centers of this type guarantee their surrounding residential neighborhoods the means of better living...a regional pattern based on such community shopping and civic centers can offer an effective answer to the problems of decentralization.”<sup>14</sup>

## | COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

The tenants of Northland Center doubted that the inclusion of non-commercial ‘public’ spaces would improve what little business they expected from an inwardly focused and segregated scheme. The immense success of Northland Center shocked even the greatest enthusiasts of the regional shopping center; “the participation of the inhabitants of the region...has proved to be of an intensity and expressed itself in forms which even the most optimistic of us did not quite foresee.”<sup>15</sup> Gruen described a typical Sunday at the regional shopping center

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14 Ketchum, 271.

15 Gruen, *The Heart of Our Cities*, 203.

where his surprised clients observed masses of people “dressed in their Sunday best, engaging in an activity that was believed to be long forgotten.”<sup>16</sup> Although the stores of the shopping center were closed on Sundays, families came from the surrounding suburbs and could be observed “strolling leisurely...relaxed and admiring the flowers and trees, sculptures and murals, fountains and ponds.”<sup>17</sup> A New York Times article in 1955 confirms this trend across America when it compared the Sunday visitors of shopping centers to those Sunday window shoppers on Fifth Avenue.<sup>18</sup> Besides providing a place for visitors to engage in the kind of social activities associated with the landscaped malls of the regional shopping centers around the United States, the inclusion of spaces such as those found at Roosevelt Field Shopping Center allowed for an even deeper level of social integration. Fashion shows, balls, plays, and concerts all worked to create the type of capitals suburbia was so much in need of. James W. Rouse, founder of The Rouse Company, pioneering builders and developers of regional shopping centers, commented that such facilities that hosted after-hour community events, “are designed to establish and continually strengthen the shopping center’s position as a real community center.”<sup>19</sup> Rouse continued on to say that while these events may not have had any direct correlation with the stores of the center in the way that a fashion show might, by increasing the center’s stake in the community, it increased the likelihood of increased traffic and thus business. To this end, architects of Roosevelt Field shopping center designed a plaza with an accompanying steel and glass umbrella that was designed for year-round promotions as well as civic activities and exhibitions.<sup>20</sup> At Eastland and North Shore shopping centers a special events building was designed for exhibits, community shows and Eastland

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16 Gruen, *The Heart of Our Cities*, 203.

17 Gruen, *The Heart of Our Cities*, 203.

18 “Sales of Center Surprise Owners,” *New York Times*, 22 Feb 1955: 26.

19 Gruen and Smith, *Shopping Towns USA*, 258.

20 “Roosevelt Field Shopping Center.” *Progressive Architecture*, Sept. 1955: 92.





## | 07

### SOUTHDALE SHOPPING CENTER

Fashion show in the mall's main court.

source:

Victor Gruen, *Shopping Centers of Tomorrow* (Washington D.C.: American Federation of Arts, 1950), 258

included a radio studio for daily broadcasts by a local radio station.<sup>21</sup> Reviewed by the *Michigan Society of Architects* in 1954, Northland's aim was "to help fill the need for social, cultural and civic crystallization points in our sprawling suburban areas."<sup>22</sup> Additionally, the article pointed out, the type of planning involved for Northland was on the level of city planning, which had never been applied to commercial ventures before; "the organization of separate architectural elements into one integrated whole, coordinated with the surrounding physical, economic, and sociological factors. This planning principle has long been the tool of the architect in working with large scale institutional projects, college campuses, and civic centers. At Northland it has been applied to a purely commercial enterprise."<sup>23</sup> Helping to

21 Kraft, "Eastland, the Multi-Million Dollar Shopping Center," *Michigan Architect and Engineer*, Aug. 1957: 12.

22 "Northland; a regional shopping center for Detroit, Michigan", *Michigan Society of Architects*, Mar. 1954: 34.

23 "Northland; a regional shopping center for Detroit, Michigan", *Michigan Society of Architects*, Mar. 1954: 34.

achieve this was the center's art program. Thirteen sculptures were commissioned for the center constituting, "one of the few times that such as extensive use has been made of the artists in a modern commercial venture".<sup>24</sup> The use of art strengthened the cultural function of shopping centers, and gives a glimpse into the potential of these building types as civic centers.

The business goals of these shopping centers was undeniable, but the way in which culture and community was folded into many shopping center plans was a realization of the centralizing goals for suburbia. *Architectural Forum* in 1953 commented on Southdale's design saying that it went "far beyond what any previous center has attempted, [to] really tackle the problem of preventing community blight".<sup>25</sup> In this center Gruen had put his most radical theories into practice. The reason for the indoor pedestrian mall scheme's overwhelming success was due to its ability to allow for cultural activities in all seasons. After all, it was the social functions of the regional shopping center that were attracting the most attention from suburbanites. The Symphony Ball held annually at Southdale beginning in 1958 attracted 2500 guests at its inaugural event.<sup>26</sup> Gruen's earlier projects in Detroit, Northland and Eastland Centers were no exception. Eastland Center's children's' attraction, Animal Land, brought in 65,000 visitors at Easter in 1957 and 200,000 visitors the next year.<sup>27</sup> A model home built on Northland's terrace brought in 500,000 visitors over a period of six months<sup>28</sup> and its public auditorium and meeting rooms were booked for an entire year within weeks of the center's opening.<sup>29</sup> Economic success followed the influx of people attracted to the social environment created at Northland. It was estimated that

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24 "Architecture, Sculpture: the Northland Regional Shopping Center," *Arts and Architecture*, May 1955: 21.

25 Gruen, *The Heart of Our Cities*, 194 - 195

26 Gruen and Smith, *Shopping Towns USA*, 259.

27 Gruen and Smith, *Shopping Towns USA*, 261.

28 Gruen and Smith, *Shopping Towns USA*, 262.

29 Gruen, *The Heart of Our Cities*, 203.



## | 08

### EASTLAND SHOPPING CENTER

Easter Parade at Eastland Center,  
Detroit in the 1950s.

source:

"Discuss Detroit, 1954-1968."

Detroit News. Accessed 02 Apr.

2012. <<http://atdetroit.net/forum/messages/6790/159540.html>>.

the center's sales would be \$50,000,000, the immense success of the center put actual sales at over \$80,000,000.<sup>30</sup> Horace Carpenter, Vice President and General Manager of Northland Center in 1960 described Northland's theater as being an asset to the community, and therefore the shopping center as well. By appealing to a demographic that might not have otherwise made the trip to visit the center, Carpenter stated, "[the theater] has publicized the center and made Northland...a focal point in the community...it has lured people out of their homes and to Northland Center, even though they were not interested in shopping...This is very important – people learn about Northland and coming there becomes a

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30 "Sales of Center Surprise Owners," *New York Times*, 22 Feb 1955: 26.



habit.”<sup>31</sup> The habit that Carpenter speaks of is key. As these centers grew into communities and began to fill a need, they became a part of a ritual of suburban life. Richard Bennett identifies shopping as a “social ritual” in his 1957 article on shopping centers, saying that the purchase of items by the housewife must be done “in an atmosphere that suggests the culmination of a quest.”<sup>32</sup> Speaking later of this habit, Robert Coles in an article in *Psychology Today* summed up the importance of shopping centers for the suburbanite; “the nearest thing I’ve seen in the suburbs to the communal rituals of more traditional communities is the Saturday trip to the shopping center...The important thing is the act of going to a particular place where they many know other people or where they may at least recognize others as impersonally like themselves. ... Some suburbanites may not go next door to meet a person, but suburbanites will come home and discuss at length how they met so-and-so shopping.”<sup>33</sup> While developers and owners focused on the business end of this ritual, architects continued to promote the benefits of the regional shopping center to the suburban quality of life; “Among the other events that contribute to the cultural life of the community are the art exhibits and competitions that flourish in many of the shopping centers...[such as] the art exhibit held in the Capitol Court Shopping Center in Milwaukee in the summer of 1958, which has been described as the largest art exhibit ever witnessed in the area.”<sup>34</sup> Later articles and books substantiate early architects’ claims of creating a new center of suburban society. A 1969 *Wall Street Journal* article reports, “sociologists say, the large regional shopping centers are providing a focal point and a symbol of identity for the otherwise formless sprawl of suburbia.”<sup>35</sup> Robert Handson, assistant superintendents of schools at Cherry Hill, New Jersey observed, “We were just another series of housing developments until the mall was built...now we have a

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31 Gruen and Smith, *Shopping Towns USA*, 260

32 Hornbeck, *Stores and Shopping Centers*, 92.

33 Robert Coles, *Psychology Today*, Nov 1975 qtd. in Kowinski, 139.

34 Gruen and Smith, *Shopping Towns USA*, 261.

35 Jack H Morris, “Meet Me at the Mall,” *Wall Street Journal*, 20 Feb. 1969: 1



## | 09

### SOUTHDALE SHOPPING CENTER

Located in Edina, Minnesota, a suburb of Minneapolis, designed by Victor Gruen Associates, opened in 1956. "Ball in the Mall" at Southdale Shopping Center.

source:

Victor Gruen, "Retailing and the Automobile" in *Stores and Shopping Centers*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), 109.

sense of community".<sup>36</sup> Among other such community involving programs, Cherry Hill shopping center played host to the local high school prom in 1969, "One night each spring the stores close early and the mall becomes a romantic garden and the scene of the high school prom."<sup>37</sup> Other examples abound. Bergen Mall was host to a year-round theater offering suburbanites an alternative to Broadway and the Cincinnati Symphony held annual concerts at the Tri-County Center.<sup>38</sup> Northpark Center in Dallas hosted art and ballet shows and strolling minstrels at their summer festival.<sup>39</sup> At the Garden State Plaza and Bergen Shopping Center in Paramus,

36 Morris, "Meet Me at the Mall," *Wall Street Journal*, 20 Feb. 1969: 1

37 Morris, "Meet Me at the Mall," *Wall Street Journal*, 20 Feb. 1969: 1

38 Morris, "Meet Me at the Mall," *Wall Street Journal*, 20 Feb. 1969: 1

39 Morris, "Meet Me at the Mall," *Wall Street Journal*, 20 Feb. 1969: 1

## SOUTHDALÉ SHOPPING CENTER

Interior court at Southdale Mall,  
Minneapolis.

source:

Dean, C. H. "Garden Court,  
Southdale Center, Edina, 1960."

Resource: Photo. Minnesota  
Historical Society. Accessed 27  
Jan. 2012. <[http://stories.mnhs.org/stories/mgg/resources/artifact.do?shortName=southdale\\_court](http://stories.mnhs.org/stories/mgg/resources/artifact.do?shortName=southdale_court)>.



New Jersey, "Well-attended programs and exhibitions taught shoppers about such 'hot' topics of the 1950s and 1960s as space exploration, color television, modern art, and civics," and classes, campaign appearances, community outreach and local charities placed these shopping centers at the heart of the suburbs they served.<sup>40</sup> The pedestrian mall scheme, with all its infused notions of the social potentials of shopping centers, worked and led to its widespread use across America, turning it into what everyone today can readily identify as a "mall". The use of that term, however, indicates precisely the success of early regional shopping center designs and the acuteness of early observations on the needs that had to be fulfilled in order to elevate the suburban quality of life.

The use of the idiom "mall" to describe the regional shopping center in itself identifies the exact importance that these centers had in suburban life. The fact that over time the leisure aspect of these commercial spaces has become that which identifies them is, in itself, the definition of the importance of these places

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40 Lizabeth Cohen, "From Town Center to Shopping Center: The Reconfiguration of Community Marketplaces in Postwar American," *American Historical Review*, Oct. 1996: 1058





## | 11

**STONESTOWN SHOPPING CENTER**  
Children's playland on the roof of the shopping center.

source:

Victor Gruen, *Shopping Towns, U.S.A.*, (New York: Reinhold Publishers, 1950), 260.

in the suburban communities they drew from. As Joel Garreau points out in his book *Edge City* present day “malls” are just as much a center of “village life” as the 17th century promenades were four hundred years ago.<sup>41</sup> In the early years of the 1950s, the “pedestrian mall scheme” had as its identifying characteristic a central green space – literally a mall – meant for rest and social interaction with the implementation of such rudimentary identifiers as the bench, fountain, and shade tree. This shopping center type differed from its contemporaries in that valuable space that would otherwise be used for parking or retail space was given over to the consumer.<sup>42</sup> For early models, this space played a truly civic function in towns like Greenbelt, Maryland or Los Alamos, New Mexico. In these developments, the shopping center was the town center. Later suburban centers recognized that the value of such a space was not in its function as a type of public park, but in its ability to meld together shopping and leisure, the successful precedents for which were the marketplaces of ancient Athens and Rome and the

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41 Garreau, 3-4.

42 Recall that for Sears, Roebuck, the single most important factor in establishing a store was the parking available, so to give away valuable land to the pedestrian was a radical move.





## 12 |

### MAYFAIR SHOPPING CENTER

Mayfair mall interior court full of activity.

source:

"Inner-Directed Regional Center" in *Stores and Shopping Centers*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), 151.

town squares and markets of historic London and Boston. Eugene Kelley, writing in 1956 for *Highway Traffic Control*, understood the impact of these precedents and advised, "Both social and economic aspects of the marketplace should be understood to appreciate the inadequacy of many present day shopping districts in large cities and the corresponding appeal of regional centers."<sup>43</sup> Genevieve Smith's 1954

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43 Kelley, 70.



article identifies “two schools of thought, the landscaped mall and narrow streets” – eventually the former would win out.<sup>44</sup> The pedestrian mall allowed architects to achieve a modern interpretation of the blended social and economic spaces of these historic markets. The gradual change in focus from the exterior facing shopping centers set back behind expansive parking lots to the interior malls focused on the pedestrian was a result of the changing focus of the shopper from commercial venture to social ritual. Victor Gruen predicted the rise of the importance of the interior court as he said, “the pedestrian area will gain in importance...show windows directed toward parking areas may gradually disappear.”<sup>45</sup> This change resulted from the increased civic and social role played by regional shopping centers in the lives of suburbanites. Architects saw in the new program of the regional shopping center a potential that was already building and, if harnessed correctly, could have immense impacts for the center-less suburbs. In his book *The Mall of America*, William Kowinski recounts the all too familiar story of a friend growing up in the Long Island suburbs of the 1950s for whom, “the equivalent of going to the city was going to Roosevelt Field Mall...[it] became not just a place to pick up a few things between trips to the city, but an alternative to the city itself.”<sup>46</sup> As the suburbs became more and more detached from the cities from whence they came, stories like this became commonplace. The lack of public gathering space in the 1950s suburban environments is what prompted families to visit centers like Northland on a Sunday when no shops were open and what created the familiar social scenes for teenagers and parents alike. Writing in 1964, Gruen states that the regional shopping centers had become a “crystallization point for the up-to-then amorphous, sprawling suburban region.”<sup>47</sup> The idealistic concepts about suburban living and the use of the “mall” as a centralizing and organizational tool transcended

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44 Genevieve Smith, “Regional Shopping Grows Fast.” *Printer’s Ink*, 14 May 1954: 38.

45 Gruen and Smith, *Shopping Towns USA*, 270.

46 Kowinski, 134.

47 Gruen, *The Heart of Our Cities*, 191.



### 13 |

#### SOUTHDALE SHOPPING CENTER

The Interior court at Southdale Mall, Minneapolis provides gathering space all year.

source:

Schmidt, Jessica R. "Meeting Transportation's 21st Century Web Briefing Challenges - Web Briefing." Institute of Transportation Engineers. 2010. Accessed 26 Jan. 2012. <<http://www.ite.org/education/meetingchallenges/wb2010.html>>.

the profession in the 1950s and early 1960s as it was the suburban populace who responded to create a reality from the plans that various architects hoped would come to life. What had been the often over-idealized rhetoric of architects like Victor Gruen, was taken seriously by the people attracted to their projects and in the end, it was the people that embraced the mall and allowed it to take its place as a truly centralizing force in suburbia.





## **CHAPTER 05**

*The Future of the Mall*



*"If a privatizing ideology and a consumerist culture have turned citizens into consumers, we need to go to where the consumers are and try to turn them back into citizens...If they go to the mall in search of public space and are seduced into privatized shopping behavior, we need to confront and transform the mall."*

*Benjamin R. Barber, "Civic Space", Sprawl and Public Space.*

## **| MALL DEVELOPMENT AFTER 1965**

Regional shopping centers built in the 1940s, 1950s, and early 1960s were incredibly successful and spawned a multitude of copies across America, somewhere along the way transcending the traditional reference of "shopping center" and becoming simply "the mall." What had initially created the catapulting success of these malls, however, was what for many spelled their destruction. As suburbia continued to sprawl, cheap land and purchasing power passed by inner-ring neighborhoods, creating further more lucrative rings of development. Early regional malls no longer found themselves in the midst of an open uncluttered landscape, rather they were encircled by the congestion their designers had meant to avoid. The lure of easy access from traffic-free highways and expressways no longer applied. Unable to afford the land needed to expand into the super-regional and megamalls that began to dominate the market in the 1970s, numerous

regional malls fell into disrepair and demolition. Left to be “the proud icons of an earlier wave of suburbanization,” these malls brought the kind of community blight that those who created them had fought against.<sup>1</sup> Along with neglect, many of these early malls had to battle a disintegrating public opinion, propagated by a plethora of watered-down copies that littered suburbia with blank facades and purely commercial programs. Public opinion, which had initially been the mall’s very means of success, swiftly crumbled, bringing down with it many examples of the diverse building types that had initially captured the nation’s imagination.

## | MALL DIVERSITY

During the 1960s as the shopping mall grew in both size and number, it also grew in variety. Upscale malls, outlet malls, entertainment malls and the like targeted specific demographic groups and came to reflect the communities they served. With the growing popularity of these specific malls and the shifting of focus past the inner ring suburbs where many regional malls were sited, those who didn’t adapt were neglected and left partially or completely abandoned. Unfortunately, in the same way that an upscale or outlet mall signifies a specific demographic, dead and dying malls have encouraged a negative connotation for their communities. Writing of the impact of changing demographics, Robert Fishman articulated this issue, “‘Boarded-up malls sit by the highway and function like billboards that say ‘Disinvest Here.’ Ultimately, the rise of dead malls undermines the communities in which they are located, fueling further disinvestment and sprawl’”.<sup>2</sup> The commercial blight that the regional shopping center had been designed to eradicate has, for many, become their new reality. Today the largest percentage of America’s poor reside in the suburbs, creating a significant change in the middle class image of suburban life. The rate of growth of those living in poverty suggests that this trend

<sup>1</sup> David J. Smiley, “Addressing Redress,” in *Sprawl and Public Space: Redressing the Mall*, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2002), 14.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Fishman, “Towards an Open-Minded Space,” in *Sprawl and Public Space: Redressing the Mall*, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2002), 10.

will continue. Between 1999 and 2008, this population grew five times as fast in the suburbs as it did in the city.<sup>3</sup> In addition, over the course of the 2000s, metropolitan incomes have declined and the middle class has shrunk.<sup>4</sup> Yet for these inner-ring suburbs, the shopping malls that had once reinvented the consumer experience have the potential to again evolve for the new suburban realities that confront these shopping centers today. In the same way that architects and developers of the 1950s had to re-envision commerce in suburbia, shopping malls now must rethink common modes of commercial development in order to respond specifically to the character of inner-ring suburbs. As David Smiley recognizes, “This new diverse demography suggests that analyses of the mall need to transcend questions of commerce to address how these places support the public life of their communities.”<sup>5</sup> For Smiley and others, the new diversities in race and class is an exciting change. While poverty in inner-ring suburbs has grown Robert Fishman asserts that this is simply an opportunity for the shopping mall to adapt, “According to conventional wisdom, the racial, ethnic and class portraits of the communities that now surround many older malls cannot sustain the profits and cash flow to maintain viable businesses. But...in the case of the older shopping center, such thinking fails to acknowledge that ...studies of inner suburban communities show bustling neighborhoods filled with people who are employed, who own their homes, and are more ready to shop and use these places for a variety of activities.”<sup>6</sup> Just as the first shopping centers adapted preconceived notions of commerce to fit into the needs and patterns of the new suburban living styles, these same malls can again be adapted. The legacy of the early regional shopping mall was its remarkable ability to fit exactly into what the population needed, from the owner who wanted a successful business, to the suburbanites who wanted a place to gather, to the designers who wanted to radically and positively affect the suburbs they had created.

3 “State of Metropolitan America,” *Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program* 2010: 133.

4 “State of Metropolitan America,” *Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program* 2010: 138.

5 Smiley, *Sprawl and Public Space: Redressing the Mall*, 15.

6 Smiley, *Sprawl and Public Space: Redressing the Mall*, 14–15.

For the shopping malls of today, to carry on this legacy would be to adapt to a new market, a new urban situation, and a new way of living in the 21st century.

## | A DEMOCRATIC SPACE

The moment of shift from city center to suburbs presented a significant change in the interpretation of public space. Where previously parks and city sidewalks had been available for the free and open gathering of groups, the rapid growth of suburban neighborhoods had not allowed the planning or design of such gathering space and thus public space fell into private hands. As regional shopping centers took the place of public space, inevitable conflicts arose between mall owners and the public they wished to attract. Additionally as many regional malls phased out the integration of civic spaces, most malls came to be seen by many as a commercial machine dominated by a single motivation; to sell. No longer was the civic nature of the original regional mall a part of the conversation. Robert Fishman, well known author on issues relating to suburbia, wrote an essay describing the democratic qualities of public spaces in the specific case of the mall. He points to the fact that current political philosophy has recognized public space as a vital need for the existence of a democracy; "A democratic polity needs what the philosopher Michael Walzer has called 'open-minded spaces,' places where a wide variety of people can coexist...places whose multiple possibilities lead naturally to the communication that makes democracy possible."<sup>7</sup> Where early regional malls operated as "open-minded spaces" through providing civic and social functions designed to create a community center, the plethora of copies made without the guidance of planners and architects stripped the regional shopping mall down to its barest essentials using the term "mall" without providing the kind of social basis from which the landscaped precedent for the term developed. Today, the mall presents a false sense of the public realm by encouraging "public" gatherings but

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7 Fishman, *Sprawl and Public Space: Redressing the Mall*, 9.

with a control of who constitutes this public. While initially conceived as open to all types of public by developers, planners and architects many regional shopping malls eventually turned to the model that individual stores had always used – marketing toward a specific age, class, or race through subtle context. Such was the case with Mall of America. Connected to Minneapolis by public transit, the mall would suggest its invitation to all different kinds of “public”. When a group of minority teens found the mall to be an agreeable place to spend their weekend evenings, the management employed various techniques to attempt to discourage their gathering. Eventually, after being pressured by the minority communities, the mall transformed the basement of Macy’s into a youth club, proving both the adaptability of the regional mall type and to an extent its publicness.<sup>8</sup> Various tactics from increased security to material finishes are used by malls to regulate who feels comfortable using the “public” space they provide, yet in some instances the publicness of the space can affect changes on these private enterprises. Court rulings in cases between the property rights of mall owners and the right to free speech by mall users have not made clear the boundaries of public and private in shopping malls as both sides have had victories. The first ruling by the Supreme Court came in the 1968 case of *Amalgamated Food Employees Union Local 590 vs. Logan Valley Plaza, Inc.* which defended the rights of union member to picket a grocery store at the Logan Valley Plaza in Altoona, Pennsylvania.<sup>9</sup> A 1972 ruling in the case of *Lloyd Corp. vs. Tanner* decided that the passing out of leaflets by anti-war advocates infringed upon the property rights of the owners of the Lloyd Center in Portland, Oregon.<sup>10</sup> In 1980 the Supreme Court ruled in favor of high school students gathering petitions against a U.N. resolution in the case *PruneYard Shopping Center vs. Robbins* and stated that the state could extend the protection

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8 Crawford, *Sprawl and Public Space: Redressing the Mall*, 28.

9 Cohen, “From Town Center to Shopping Center: The Reconfiguration of Community Marketplaces in Postwar American,” *American Historical Review*, Oct. 1996: 1068–1069.

10 “From Town Center to Shopping Center: The Reconfiguration of Community Marketplaces in Postwar American,” *American Historical Review*, Oct. 1996: 1069.



of free speech beyond federal standards.<sup>11</sup> Since this case, property rights have been winning out over free speech in most states with the exception of California, Colorado, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Oregon, and Washington.<sup>12</sup> A ruling by the New Jersey Supreme Court in 1994 defended the right of free speech for those opposed to the Persian Gulf War who wanted to distribute leaflets in ten regional malls throughout the state and stated, "The economic lifeblood once found downtown has moved to suburban shopping centers...Found at these malls are most of the uses and activities citizens engage in outside their homes ... This is the new, the improved, the more attractive downtown business district—the new community... Defendants have taken that old downtown away from its former home and moved all of it, except free speech, to the suburbs."<sup>13</sup> This historic decision was one in a line of decisions regarding the exercise of public rights on private property and points to the types of social and cultural centers these regional centers really did become. The politics of space is a central issue in the criticisms of today's shopping malls. As Benjamin Barber observes of the modern shopping mall, "[it] refuses to play host to churches or synagogues, to community theater or art galleries, to political speech...town halls or social services of any kind. On entering an enclosed mall, we are asked to shed every identity other than that of the consumer."<sup>14</sup> This description is quite the opposite of the proposals and projects of the immediate postwar years, and highlights the disconnect that our malls today have with the multifunctional suburban shopping centers envisioned by the architects of the 1950s. By understanding these critiques and comparing them with the original intentions of the regional shopping center, communities might begin to see a different future for the much maligned malls of America.

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11 Kevin Mattson, "Antidotes to Sprawl" in *Sprawl and Public Space: Redressing the Mall*, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2002), 38.

12 Mattson, *Sprawl and Public Space: Redressing the Mall*, 38.

13 Sam Roberts, "Now, Public Rights in Private Domains," *New York Times* 25 Dec. 1994: E3.

14 Benjamin Barber, "Civic Space", in *Sprawl and Public Space: Redressing the Mall*, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2002), 33.

## | MALL REUSE

Through a variety of factors, our commercial building stock has far outgrown demand. The shift toward internet purchases, the economic downturn, the receding waves of suburbanization all have led to a moment that has left us with a plethora of unused space. This has sparked the imaginations and creativity of both professionals in design and planning and the people who are in these communities of how to reinvent these spaces to adapt to current demands. One example of this are current trends in New Urbanism theories. Without presenting an all encompassing analysis of new urbanist and smart growth theories and practices, it is worth a glance if only to understand the trends that could affect the future of the regional mall. Proponents of new urbanism and smart growth approach suburban development with the belief that sprawl is a detrimental force to both the social and environmental well-being of suburbanites. David Brain articulates this concern; “a case can be made that the erosion of meaningful public space by suburban development... is part of what has become a kind of trained incapacity for public life.”<sup>15</sup> With this, many have proposed changes that would convert the auto-scaled suburb to a human-scaled town. Through the infill of parking lots, planting of green space, and the adaptation or demolition of strip malls, convenience stores, and some residential developments, new urbanism and smart growth propose a densification. In Galina Tahchieva’s *Sprawl Repair Manual*, she states that sprawl has damaged the social health of the suburbs by “isolating people in car-dominated environments where they are deprived...of the natural human interactions of typical complete communities.”<sup>16</sup> Interestingly, this is the same type of rhetoric used by the architects of early regional shopping centers. Their solution, however, was to completely separate cars and people in their inwardly focused pedestrian mall schemes, new urbanism and smart growth re-present the cluster formation paradigm of earlier shopping center developments. In the case of the regional mall, Ellen

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15 David Brain, “From Good Neighborhoods to Sustainable Cities: Social Science and the Social Agenda of the New Urbanism,” *International Regional Science Review*, May 2005: 224.

16 Galina Tachieva, *Sprawl Repair Manual*, (Washington: Island Press, 2010), 3.

Dunham-Jones and June Williamson give various examples of a mall retrofit in line with new urbanist and smart growth principles within their book *Retrofitting Suburbia*. Villa Italia Mall is a prime example of such a “retrofit”. Opened in 1966, the mall served the suburb of Lakewood outside Denver, Colorado. With changing demographics, a redevelopment of the mall seemed like the ideal opportunity to attract new residents.<sup>17</sup> The developer, as well as the authors of *Retrofitting Suburbia*, claim that the new form, which demolishes all but one building, does not imitate a downtown plan but rather is a downtown plan.<sup>18</sup> With new streets cut through what used to be pedestrian space, the project envisions a literal downtown placed in this suburb. While this and other projects propose a mixing of commercial and social functions with the design of a “new downtown”, what many of these projects fail to realized is that, in their default to the urban patterns of the city center, the suburb is an entirely different condition which deserves a different approach. The cut-and-paste method will not turn it into an urban experience. Instead of taking into consideration the developments that made the pedestrian mall scheme much more successful than the cluster arrangement, these dead or dying malls are being razed, a pattern seen around the country.<sup>19</sup> While many of the intentions presented by Dunham-Jones, Tahchieva and others are sound, they fail to recognize the processes of development that lead to the general public embracing the pedestrian mall schemes rather than cluster developments. The incorporation of leisure and civic spaces – large plazas, community gathering spaces, play areas for children – within a commercial context is what aided the explosion of shopping malls. It is the abundance of design for leisure and civic activities that should be focused on in the retrofitting of our suburban commercial cores. Fortunately, the mall has always been adaptable in form and functions within the criterion of leisure and civics, and can readily adapt to new circumstances.

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17 Ellen Dunham-Jones, and June Williamson, *Retrofitting Suburbia* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2008), 156.

18 Dunham-Jones and Williamson, 156.

19 See Appendix A for a list of malls.

## | MALL PRESERVATION

For preservationists, in many ways the argument is just beginning. The National Register released a bulletin in 2002, “Historic Residential Suburbs”, which is the Register’s only current literature on the evaluation of historic fabric in the suburbs. In a collection of essays entitled *Changing Suburbs*, David Ames described the process by which he researched and wrote these guidelines. As he states the importance of these guidelines, Ames reflects that the lack of such a basis is what prompted the National Register to start considering the postwar suburbs and develop their guidelines. In his article, Ames presents an interpretation of the suburbs as a historic landscape. Through this lens, he states, “This is the landscape of the American Dream, of the single-family house on its own lot sited within the large-scale, self-contained subdivision with a curvilinear street pattern.”<sup>20</sup> Again, the focus is on the home and not the commerce, but to capture a truly all-encompassing segment of this American dream, then the regional shopping mall must be considered as a part of the cultural values that greatly affected the early postwar suburban landscape. As Ames laments, “studies tend to interpret the evolution of the American house as a reflection of family values...[but] do not systematically explore how the house evolves as part of that larger suburban landscape.”<sup>21</sup> Regional shopping malls are a significant part of the “larger suburban landscape” as they represent a series of decisions by architects, planners and suburbanites on what it meant to create community in suburbia. Yet the National Register’s focus has been limited to the subdivisions and neighborhoods in which people lived rather than the larger suburban landscape. While some suburban shopping centers have been listed such as Shaker Square and Country Club Plaza, the focus of suburban commercial development has been on prewar development and not the development – the regional shopping center – that represented the pinnacle of the

20 David Ames, “Understanding Suburbs as Historic Landscapes through Preservation” in *Changing Suburbs: Foundation, Form, and Function* (London: E & FN Spon, 1999), .222.

21 Ames, “Understanding Suburbs as Historic Landscapes through Preservation” in *Changing Suburbs: Foundation, Form, and Function*, 226.

suburban commercial experience both in architecture and in the context of suburban life. In order to more fully comprehend the significance of the suburbs, we must expand our studies of the suburban environment and develop a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of this landscape beyond the house and lawn.

Richard Longstreth claims that the beginnings of the preservation movement in the 1960s was born out of “a dislike for work of the present; shopping malls and commercial strips, new residential tracts...and the ever more ambitious roadways that served all of them.”<sup>22</sup> If one were to take this claim on, it would suggest that preserving those buildings that were the issues that started the ball rolling might be counter intuitive – but perhaps it is just bringing the profession full circle. To understand that regional shopping malls changed the landscape of America is undoubtable. To preserve them is to capture a moment in this nation’s history when cities and suburbs were changing at a rapid pace and changing the way we lived. The regional mall’s significance to historic preservation is multifaceted. It played critical role in suburbia at a historic moment when America became the world’s first suburban nation. It introduced a revolutionary approach to building design both through its specific response to the conditions of suburbia and the tension between the automobile and the pedestrian as well as through its organization into a seamless whole dozens of professions. From architect to artist to landscape architect to planner to industrial designer and graphic artist, by treating each discipline as part of a larger unit without one part playing a more important part than the next the regional mall made it possible to create on a small scale a kind of town planning necessary to create a new suburban center. The regional mall’s ability to create a new cultural and civic center that was embraced unanimously by newly suburban population that was seeking a place to foster a sense of community was a significant point in the social history of suburbia. Yet,

22 Richard Longstreth, “When the Present Becomes the Past” in *Past Meets Future: Saving America’s Historic Environments* (Washington, D.C.: Preservation Press, 1992), 213.



the significance of the regional shopping center, cannot be determined separately by its historical importance, design achievements, or cultural value. Its significance lies in the way that these three narratives combined to create a pinnacle moment in which suburban sprawl was first being approached as a force to be remedied through design. Joel Garreau comments on the significance of our suburbs when he stated that “they are the culmination of a generation of individual American value decisions about the best ways to live, work, and play.”<sup>23</sup> And the regional shopping center – the mall – is the monument to these value decisions. The long history leading up to the creation of the regional shopping center is evident of its being an important landmark in the development of suburban commercialism. For the first time, architects and planners took to heart the idea of enacting a positive change on the lives of suburbanites. The pure commercialism that dominates malls today and commercial developments before the creation of the regional mall type was questioned by both client and designer and began a critical discussion about the character of the suburbs. That the regional mall was a response as much to its environment as well as it was a response to greater social ideals is clear from the theories of early mall architects. That these idealist theories translated into an immensely successful business model is proof of that precise importance the integration of leisure, culture, and civic responsibility had in the lives of everyday Americans. This importance within the framework of suburban life is what makes the regional shopping mall significant. It is an integral part of the suburban experience and thus the greater suburban landscape. To understand the suburbs is to hold together both the housing developments where suburbanites lived and the commercial developments where suburbanites spent their free time. The regional shopping mall is the commercial development that managed to bring together all the goals of suburban commerce under a canopy of cultural programming that secured its place as the pinnacle of suburban life. Its significance rests in its being

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23 Garreau, 07-08.

representative of a significant period of American history and architectural thought  
and its place as a part of the greater landscape of the American suburb.



## **APPENDIX A**

*List of Malls 1950 - 1963*

Note:

Throughout my research for this thesis, I have kept a running list of malls as I came upon them in magazine or newspaper articles, books, and websites. The following malls are those that I found which fall within the range of dates that would make them some of the earliest examples of the type. The list is not entirely comprehensive nor has it been completely verified with regards to the significance of each in design, culture or history of each of the malls. Rather, these malls are presented to give a starting point for further research as well as to give a sense of the locations and numbers in which these malls arrived in the suburbs at the beginning of the postwar era.

<i>NAME</i>	<i>YEAR</i>	<i>CITY</i>	<i>SUBURB</i>	<i>ARCHITECT</i>
<b>ARIZONA</b>				
Park Central	1957	<i>Phoenix</i>	-	Welton Becket & Assoc.
Tower Plaza Center <sup>†</sup>	1957	<i>Phoenix</i>	-	Ralph Haber and John Schnotanus
Town and Country Center	1958	<i>Phoenix</i>	-	unknown
Maryvale Shopping City	1960	<i>Phoenix</i>	-	Victor Gruen & Assoc. <sup>‡</sup>
Chris-Town Mall <sup>*</sup>	1961	<i>Phoenix</i>	-	Welton Becket & Assoc.
Thomas Mall <sup>*†</sup>	1963	<i>Phoenix</i>	-	Novak and Israel
<b>CALIFORNIA</b>				
Country Club Centre	1952	<i>Sacramento</i>	-	unknown
Stonestown	1952	<i>San Francisco</i>	-	Welton Becket & Assoc.; Angus McSweeney
Hillsdale Center	1954	<i>San Francisco</i>	-	Welton Becket & Assoc.
Lakewood Center	1952	<i>Los Angeles</i>	Lakewood	I. Herman Kanner
Whittier Quad	1953	<i>Los Angeles</i>	Whittier	unknown
Pomona Valley Center	1955	<i>Los Angeles</i>	Pomona-Montclair	unknown
Los Altos Center	1955	<i>Los Angeles</i>	Long Beach	unknown
Whittwood Center	1956	<i>Los Angeles</i>	Whittier	unknown
Eastland Center	1957	<i>Los Angeles</i>	West Covina	Albert C. Martin & Assoc.
Stonewood Center	1958	<i>Los Angeles</i>	Downey	unknown
Sears Center	1959	<i>Los Angeles</i>	El Monte	unknown
La Mirada Center	1959	<i>Los Angeles</i>	La Mirada	unknown
Valley Fair	1957	<i>San Jose</i>	-	Victor Gruen & Assoc.
<b>COLORADO</b>				
Cherry Creek Center	1953	<i>Denver</i>	-	Temple Buell
University Hills Center <sup>†</sup>	1955	<i>Denver</i>	-	unknown
Lakeside Center <sup>†</sup>	1956	<i>Denver</i>	Lakeside	Charles R. Colbert
Westland Center <sup>†</sup>	1960	<i>Denver</i>	Jefferson Co.	unknown
Crossroads Mall <sup>*</sup>	1963	<i>Denver</i>	Boulder	Gene Shrewsury
<b>CONNECTICUT</b>				
Connecticut Post Center	1960	New Haven	Milford	Lathrop Douglas and Jesse James Hamblin



<i>NAME</i>	<i>YEAR</i>	<i>CITY</i>	<i>SUBURB</i>	<i>ARCHITECT</i>
<b>FLORIDA</b>				
Sunrise Center <sup>†</sup>	1954	<i>Fort Lauderdale</i>	-	Gamble, Pownall and Gilroy
Northside Center	1960	<i>Miami</i>	Dade County	unknown
Dadeland Center <sup>*</sup>	1962	<i>Miami</i>	Dade County	Herbert Johnson
<b>GEORGIA</b>				
Lenox Square	1959	<i>Atlanta</i>	-	Joe Amisano
Cobb County Center <sup>†</sup>	1963	<i>Atlanta</i>	Cobb County	unknown
<b>ILLINOIS</b>				
Old Orchard <sup>†</sup>	1956	<i>Chicago</i>	Skokie	Loebl Schlossman and Bennett
Hillside Center <sup>†</sup>	1956	<i>Chicago</i>	Hillside	unknown
Harlem-Irving Plaza	1956	<i>Chicago</i>	Norridge	unknown
Meadowdale Center	1957	<i>Chicago</i>	Carpentersville	unknown
Hillcrest Center <sup>†</sup>	1959	<i>Chicago</i>	Crest Hill	unknown
Golf Mill Center	1960	<i>Chicago</i>	Niles	unknown
Randhurst Center <sup>*†</sup>	1962	<i>Chicago</i>	Mount Prospect	Victor Gruen & Assoc.
Oakbrook	1962	<i>Chicago</i>	Oak Brook	Loebl Schlossman and Bennett
<b>INDIANA</b>				
Woodmar Center <sup>†</sup>	1954	<i>Chicago</i>	Hammond	unknown
Glendale	1956	<i>Indianapolis</i>	-	Victor Gruen & Assoc.
<b>MARYLAND</b>				
Mondawmin	1956	<i>Baltimore</i>	-	Mondawmin Board of Design
Wheaton Plaza	1960	<i>Washington D.C.</i>	Montgomery Co.	unknown
<b>MASSACHUSETTS</b>				
Shopper's World <sup>†</sup>	1951	<i>Boston</i>	Framingham	Ketchum, Gina & Sharp
Northshore	1958	<i>Boston</i>	Peabody	Ketchum, Gina & Sharp
New England Center <sup>†</sup>	1960	<i>Boston</i>	Saugus	unknown
South Shore Plaza	1961	<i>Boston</i>	Braintree	unknown
Westgate <sup>*</sup>	1963	<i>Boston</i>	Brockton	unknown
<b>MICHIGAN</b>				
Northland	1954	<i>Detroit</i>	Southfield	Victor Gruen & Assoc.
Eastland	1957	<i>Detroit</i>	Harper Woods	Victor Gruen & Assoc.
Frondor Center	1954	<i>Lansing</i>	East Lansing	unknown
<b>MINNESOTA</b>				
Southdale	1956	<i>Minneapolis</i>	Edina	Victor Gruen & Assoc.
<b>MISSOURI</b>				
Westroads Center <sup>†</sup>	1955	<i>St. Louis</i>	Richmond Heights	unknown
Northland <sup>†</sup>	1955	<i>St. Louis</i>	Jennings	Russell Mullgardt Schwartz & Van Hoefen
Crestwood Plaza	1957	<i>St. Louis</i>	Crestwood	Milton Construction Company

NAME	YEAR	CITY	SUBURB	ARCHITECT
MISSOURI				
River Roads Mall <sup>*†</sup>	1961	<i>St. Louis</i>	Jennings	unknown
South County Center	1963	<i>St. Louis</i>	Mehlville	Victor Gruen & Assoc. <sup>‡</sup>
NEBRASKA				
Crossroads Center <sup>†</sup>	1960	<i>Omaha</i>	–	Leo A. Daly
NEW JERSEY				
Garden State Plaza	1957	<i>New York City</i>	Paramus	Abbott, Merkt and Co.
Bergen Mall	1957	<i>New York City</i>	Paramus	John Graham & Assoc.
Menlo Park	1959	<i>New York City</i>	Edison	unknown
The Mall	1961	<i>New York City</i>	Short Hills	Skidmore, Owings, Merrill
Cherry Hill Mall	1961	<i>Philadelphia</i>	Cherry Hill	Victor Gruen & Assoc.
Black Horse Pike Center <sup>†</sup>	1961	<i>Philadelphia</i>	Camden	unknown
NEW YORK				
Cross County Center	1954	<i>New York City</i>	Yonkers	Lathrop Douglas
Mid-Island Shopping Plaza	1956	<i>New York City</i>	Hicksville, LI	Lathrop Douglas
Green Acres Center	1956	<i>New York City</i>	Valley Stream	unknown
Roosevelt Field	1956	<i>New York City</i>	East Garden City	I. M. Pei & Assoc.
Walt Whitman <sup>*</sup>	1962	<i>New York City</i>	Huntington	Welton, Becket & Assoc.
OHIO				
Town and Country Mall	c.1952	<i>Columbus</i>	Whitehall	Don M. Casto
Northland Mall <sup>†</sup>	1964	<i>Columbus</i>	–	Grossel and Jensen
Franklin Park	1952 <sup>§</sup>	<i>Toledo</i>	Toledo	Chas L. Barber
Swifton	1956	<i>Cincinnati</i>	Cincinnati	Ketchum, Gina & Sharp
Westgate <sup>†</sup>	1954	<i>Cleveland</i>	Fairview Park	Fordyce-Hamby-Strobel & Panero
Severance Center <sup>†</sup>	1963	<i>Cleveland</i>	Cleveland Heights	John Graham & Assoc.
OREGON				
Lloyd Center	1959	<i>Portland</i>	–	John Graham & Assoc.
TEXAS				
Gulfgate Shopping City <sup>†</sup>	1956	<i>Houston</i>	–	John Graham & Associates
Meyerland Plaza	1957	<i>Houston</i>	–	unknown
Sharpstown Center <sup>*</sup>	1961	<i>Houston</i>	–	Sidney H. Morris & Assoc.; Claude Hooten
Northline Shopping City <sup>†</sup>	1963	<i>Houston</i>	–	Sumner Shein & Assoc.
Big Town Mall <sup>*†</sup>	1959	<i>Dallas</i>	Mesquite	Tatum and Quade
Seminary South Center <sup>†</sup>	1962	<i>Dallas</i>	Fort Worth	unknown
VIRGINIA				
Seven Corners	1956	<i>Washington D.C.</i>	Falls Church	unknown
Parkington	1959	<i>Washington D.C.</i>	Arlington	unknown

<i>NAME</i>	<i>YEAR</i>	<i>CITY</i>	<i>SUBURB</i>	<i>ARCHITECT</i>
<b>WASHINGTON</b>				
Northgate	1950	<i>Seattle</i>	Seattle	John Graham & Assoc.
Northtown Center	1956	<i>Spokane</i>		unknown
<b>WISCONSIN</b>				
Capitol Court <sup>†</sup>	1956	<i>Milwaukee</i>	–	John Graham & Assoc.; Brust & Brust Assoc.
Mayfair	1958	<i>Milwaukee</i>	Wauwatosa	Perkins & Will; Grassold-Johnson & Assoc.

† demolished

\* originally enclosed

§ designed in 1952, built in 1974

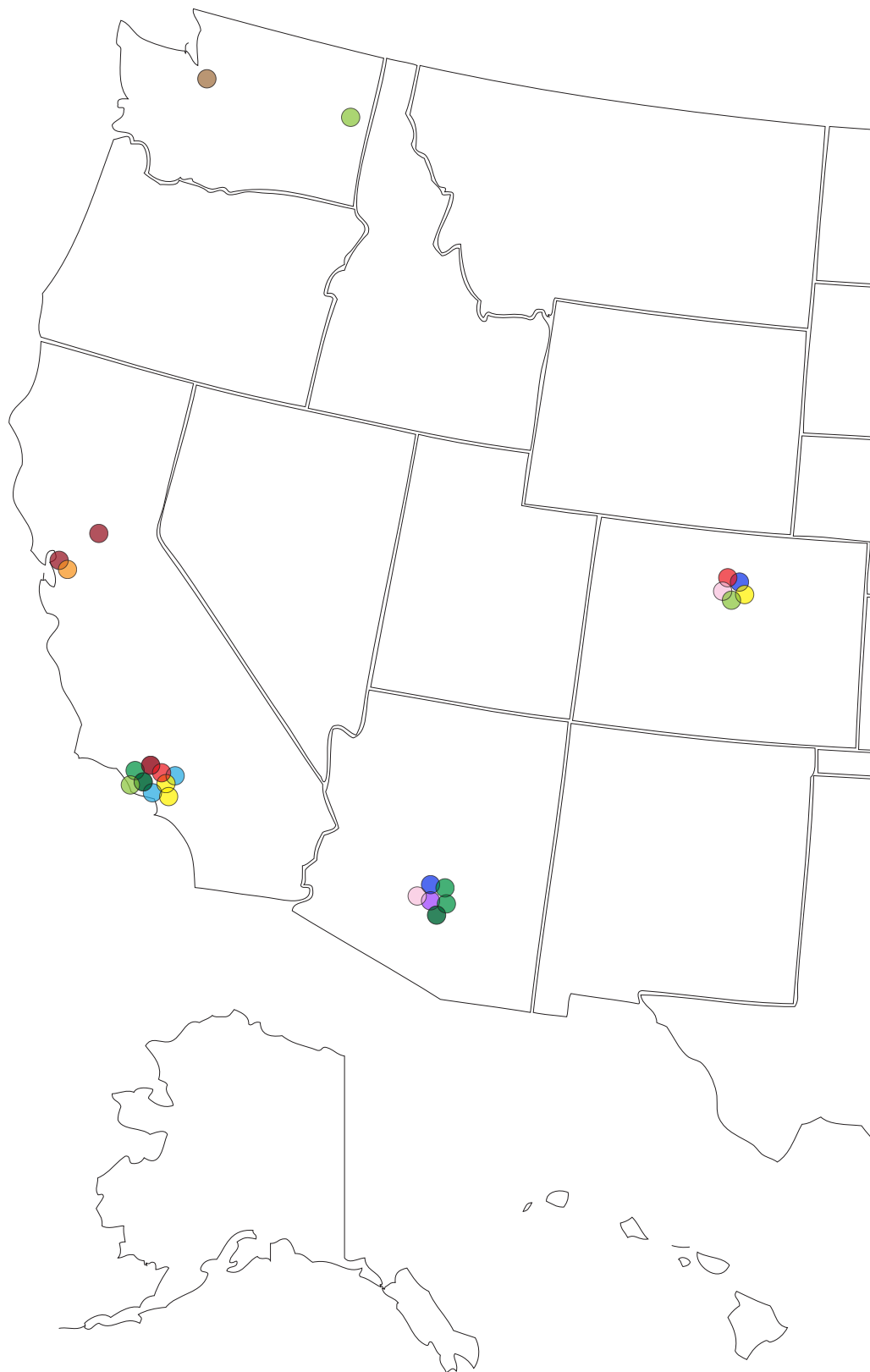
‡ advisor, not sole architect

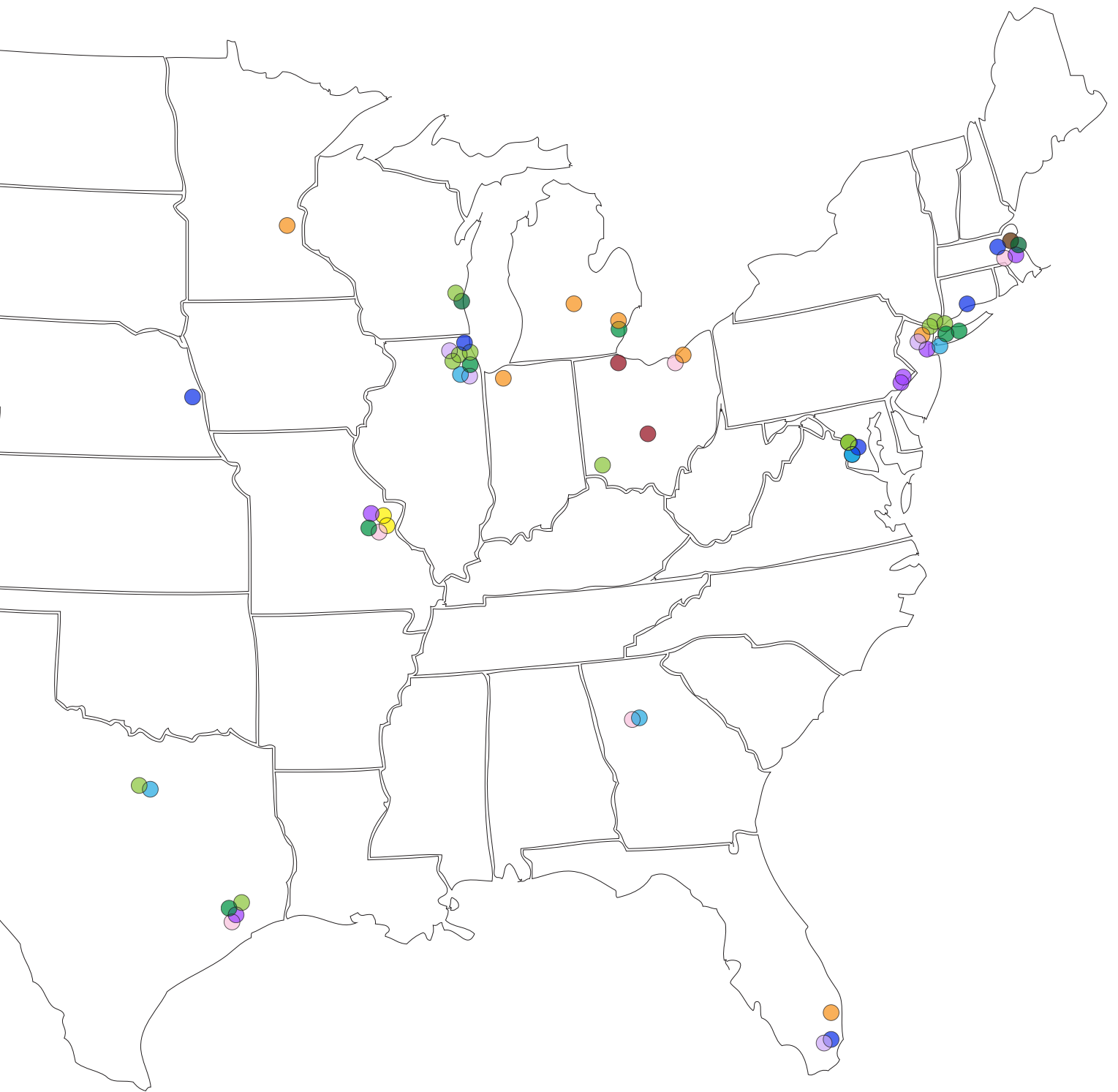


## **APPENDIX B**

*Map of Malls 1950 - 1963*









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